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VanLonely How the city is making friends

THE ENGAGED CITY TASK FORCE, ONE YEAR IN — PAGE 6

Yaletown resident Danielle Bauer says she had a hard time making friends when she moved here in 2006. The city went into the friendship business a year ago to help keep people like Bauer from feeling alone. JENNIFER GAUTHIER/FOR METRO

Taxis ramp up political donations

Disclosure. Vancouver Taxi Association donated almost 17 times more to election campaigns in 2014 than it did in 2011

The month before Vancouver's 2014 election, city council voted to put a six-month freeze on issuing taxi licences so it could figure out how to handle ride-sharing services like Uber, among other things.

It was a move welcomed by the Vancouver Taxi Association, which donated a total of $83,500 to the election campaigns of the three parties on council, according to Elections BC disclosure statements released this week.

That's nearly 17 times more than the taxi association donated in the 2011 election, where it gave $5,000 to Vision Vancouver.

The cash came in a year when Uber made moves to enter Vancouver and shake up the traditional taxi business model. At the Oct. 1 meeting, the Vancouver Taxi Association said it would fight Uber "every step of the way" if it tried to operate outside of the regulatory framework.

In the subsequent weeks, it donated an extra $17,500 to Vision, $15,000 to the Non-Partisan Association and $2,500 to the Green Party.

But Coun. Geoff Meggs rejects any suggestion that the taxi lobby would get any special treatment from council based on the donations.

Any company that wants to operate merely has to follow the rules and go through the approval process, Meggs said Wednesday.

"Uber hasn't applied. They're welcome to apply and go through the rules like anybody else," he said.

EMILY JACKSON/METRO

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Plebiscite.
Mayors say 'Yes' vote means more cash, jobs

The region's mayors say a "Yes" vote in the spring plebiscite on transit funding would add nearly $450 million a year to Metro Vancouver in economic benefits.

An economic impact study, commissioned by TransLink and conducted by InterVISTAS Consulting Group and released Wednesday, estimates that fulfilling the mayors' $7.5-billion transit plan would average economic activity of $448 million a year over the course of 10 years.

The plan would create 7,000 new jobs in the region by 2030 and over 12,000 by 2045, in direct and indirect construction and transportation-related fields.

Richmond Mayor Malcolm Brodie hopes the study can help convince voters to choose "Yes" when voting on a proposed 0.5 per cent regional sales tax increase this spring, which the transit plan is dependent on as its source of regional funding.

"We have confidence in the numbers," Brodie said of the study. "The mayors don't feel that we have to oversell or undersell the figures. What was released today is one with a positive message, but there are a lot of differing views, positive and negative, out there."

Brodie said that arguments about TransLink's governance structure and ability to manage money (key arguments for "No" campaigners) are addressed in the plan by annual audits and provisions that the Congestions Improvement Tax only be used to fund the mayors plan. MATT KIELTYKA/METRO

Competitors take part in the 2014 VASS Cup on Grouse Mountain. COURTESY DEVIN MANKY

VASS Cup adapting to weather woes

Sports. Organizers announce ski race won't go ahead, but zip-lining, Frisbee golf and sledge hockey are all in the forecast for March 5

MATT KIELTYKA
matt.kieltyka@metronews.ca

The weather won't co-operate but, true to its name, Vancouver Adaptive Snow Sports won't let that stop its largest fundraiser from going ahead.

Organizers announced Wednesday that the 2015 VASS Cup ski race can't go ahead due to the lack of snow on Grouse Mountain.

Instead, VASS has adapted and will now host an afternoon of zip-lining, sledge hockey, Frisbee golf and more on Thursday, March 5, as it raises money for programs, equipment and volunteer training.

"Mother Nature has flown south for the winter and it's really put a damper on our season. Big time," said VASS president Anne Bethune. "The ski race is off, but we're adaptive, that's where our strength is. So we're going to shift gears and have a day of adventure instead."

VASS, which provides skiing and snowboarding programs for people with disabilities on Vancouver's local mountains, has already been heavily impacted by poor weather this season.

Bethune said it has been able to provide just half of planned sessions this year, and registration for the annual VASS Cup was down because of weather.

The race has been cancelled only once before, due to high winds.

Bethune hopes opening up the event to more activities this year spurs more corporate teams and individuals to come out in lieu of the ski race.

Registration is $25 and money raised goes toward purchasing equipment and training volunteers.

Online

More information is available at www.vass.ca.

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Suspect didn't want to die a martyr, trial hears

Court. John Nuttall and his wife Amanda Korody were charged in July 2013 after an RCMP investigation

A British Columbia man accused of plotting to bomb the provincial legislature on Canada Day told an undercover RCMP officer that he didn't wish to die a martyr because he wanted to continue his mission, his trial has heard.

John Nuttall and his wife Amanda Korody were charged in July 2013 after an RCMP investigation, in which they were captured on video discussing their plans with an officer posing as an Arab businessman.

Nuttall told the officer numerous times that he wanted to embark on jihad to avenge what he believed was the Canadian military's mistreatment of Muslims abroad. Nuttall and Korody were recent converts to Islam, the trial has heard.

In a video played for the jury Wednesday, Nuttall tells the officer that he isn't interested in a suicide mission and wants to ensure he and Korody return alive. The video was recorded June 28, 2013.

"I'm not going to blow myself to kill a few taxpayers," says Nuttall, who is sitting in the passenger seat of the officer's truck, with Korody in the back.

"Sure, it will send a message, but I can send other messages."

Nuttall expresses concern that the planned attack will end with him and Korody either being captured or killed. THE CANADIAN PRESS

John Nuttall and Amanda Korody are shown in a still image taken from RCMP undercover video. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Pricing. Petition demands Nestle pay more to bottle B.C. water

Thousands of British Columbians aren't impressed by the province's decision to charge Nestle only $2.25 per million gallons of drinking water to sell for about $2.50 per bottle.

More than 78,000 Canadians, 35,900 who are from B.C., signed an online petition by SumOfUs.org to call on Premier Christy Clark to review the water rates for the global food and beverage company.

"At a time when water is in scarce supply globally, it is outrageous that Nestle can draw limitless amounts of Canada's natural resources to sell for a huge profit," SumOfUs.org campaign director Liz McDowell said in a statement.

Until legislation was introduced this month, B.C. was only province in Canada without groundwater pricing.

But the new rules don't go far enough, McDowell said, and they favour corporations rather than individuals.

"This new pricing structure, which was supposed to fix the problem of freeloading corporations, is even more outrageous at a time when many parts of the world are facing extreme water shortages," McDowell said.

EMILY JACKSON/METRO

Victoria

Man dies of injuries after altercation

A 26-year-old Victoria man has died following an altercation with passengers in a taxi.

Kyle Syrenne was taken to hospital with life-threatening injuries after the incident on Saturday.

Const. Alex Berube says the dispute happened on the Songhees First Nation reserve in Greater Victoria at about 4:30 a.m.

RCMP say a taxi had just dropped some people off when a physical altercation broke out between a group that included the cab's occupants. Officers are still trying to identify members of that group and are asking people who were in the taxi that morning to come forward.

Police have not described Syrenne's injuries or disclosed whether a weapon was involved.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Environment

Wolf hunt doesn't protect caribou, group says

A coalition of 60 environmental groups has sent the B.C. government an open letter supporting a petition that demands it stop killing wolves.

More than 173,000 people from all over the world signed the online plea saying that shooting wolves in two regions in B.C.'s Interior — one in the northeast and one along its border with Idaho — will not protect shrinking caribou herds.

The government says it plans to have hunters shoot as many as 184 wolves from helicopters this year.

Petition backers and letter signatories Pacific Wild and The Valahalla Wilderness Society argue that human encroachment is threatening caribou, not wolves.

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VanLonely One year in the fight to be friendly

Part I. It's been a year since the city created the Engaged City Task Force in a bid to improve civic engagement and fight loneliness — a project that could be a road map for other cities. Metro checks in to see what's worked, what hasn't and what they've learned

THANDI FLETCHER
AND EMILY JACKSON
vancouver@metronews.ca

Danielle Bauer lived in the same West End building surrounded by dozens of neighbours for seven years — yet she often felt alone.

She exchanged polite greetings with floormates, but the dialogue never delved deeper. That changed one Christmas when Bauer decided to break through the wall of isolation and bake and deliver them some cookies.

Danielle Bauer

"It just took someone to break the ice, because we're all sort of isolated in our own little worlds," she told Metro. "We know there's more out there, but people are nervous that someone is going to think they're weird."

Originally from Nanaimo, Bauer felt a sense of aloofness the moment she moved to Vancouver. Without the established social connections that come with growing up in one place, she realized the city would be a difficult place to make new friends.

Although she may have felt it, Bauer isn't alone.

The city has long been labelled unfriendly, a reputation confirmed in a 2012 Vancouver Foundation survey in which residents reported growing concerns about social isolation.

The city decided to tackle the problem, creating the Engaged City Task Force.

Last January, the task force released recommendations to boost voter turnout, improve community consultation and decrease indifference — with a goal of increasing community engagement and, in turn, helping residents feel less alone.

A year later, many say the problem still persists. Metro checked in with Coun. Andrea Reimer, council liaison to the task force, and Tracy Vaughn, the city's senior public-engagement adviser, to see what worked and what didn't.

The most successful task-force initiatives were simple. One set up information booths across town, and the other invited residents to check out civic facilities.

"It was like a rock concert in here. People were lined up for selfies in the mayor's chair," Reimer said of the crowds at Doors Open Vancouver, where people connected over shared interests.

But most of the work is behind the scenes. No other city has done anything quite like this, Vaughn said, so Vancouver must pioneer new processes, train staff and measure whether it's working. Is this helping social isolation? Bauer isn't sure.

She used networking website MeetUp.com to meet like-minded people but she finds social interactions outside those settings still seem superficial.

When she takes her dog to the park, people engage in small talk, "but a lot of those things are really surface," she said.

"At the end of the day, you go up in your apartment, you close your door and you're as alone as the next person," she said.

Reimer agrees, citing the end of the Second World War, suburbs and long automobile commutes as the start of the "culture of isolation."

Isolation won't disappear in a day or a year or even a decade, she said, but the city has to start somewhere.

Report card on the state of engagement

At first, the city just wanted to get people more involved in municipal affairs. But Coun. Andrea Reimer had an "a-ha moment" when reading the Vancouver Foundation report on social isolation.

"Why would people who are disconnected choose city hall as their first connection?" she said.

While it's really not the city's business to meddle in personal relationships and help people make friends, Reimer argues getting people more engaged:

• Helps create policy that reflects what residents want, as more people voting means more people have their opinions represented at the decision-making table.

• Minimizes the costs of doing nothing, as meaningful connections determine health as much as smoking or drinking, she said. If people don't engage and look after each other, the state will have to.

Pop-Up City Hall & Doors Open Vancouver

- **Initiative.** Staff held 52 Pop-Up City Halls, mostly in East and South Van, where people could pick up blue boxes, learn about the budget or register to vote. For Doors Open, they invited people to visit 20 civic buildings.
- **Did it work?** The city was happily surprised with a turnout of more than 8,500 people.
- **What they learned.** Tracy Vaughn, the city's senior public-engagement adviser, says they heard from newcomers, who said: "I'm so glad you came to me; I didn't think I mattered.'"

Social media campaign to boost voter turnout

- **Initiative.** The campaign sought to draw voters out for the November election, including "Selfie stickers" that encouraged people to share when they hit the polls.
- **Did it work?** Voter turnout was the highest it's been in a decade, with 43.4 per cent casting ballots, up from 34 per cent in 2011.
- **What they learned.** While it's impossible to know exactly why people hit the polls in higher numbers, Vaughn said the city hopes its extraordinary efforts helped get the word out. Giving people a chance to register to vote at Pop-Up City Halls seemed to be a successful reminder to get involved.

The Grandview Woodland Citizens' Assembly

- **Initiative.** Forty-eight local volunteers were selected to help create a 30-year plan for the east-side neighbourhood. The city took this unprecedented step after its first attempt at a plan broke residents' trust with the last-minute inclusion of tall towers.
- **Did it work?** It's too early to tell, but the assembly continues to meet and is expected to have made progress by spring.
- **What they learned.** The city got a hard lesson in why it's crucial to consult residents in a meaningful way. If people don't see their ideas reflected in the city's final plans, they will cause a ruckus.

Part II

The best is yet to come. Tomorrow, we look at the biggest reasons for isolation in the city (hint: cost of living) and how the city is planning to combat them. Can't wait? Read the whole package online at metronews.ca.

Vancouver still a lonely place

Carole Clark, British expat who lives on the Sunshine Coast

When Carole Clark first moved to Vancouver three years ago, she soon realized her affinity for friendly chitchat wasn't shared in this city. Be it strangers at the pub or grocery-store clerks, Clark said few people would engage in a conversation.

"I was just gob-smacked," she said. "You'd get a funny look or they'd turn around and talk to somebody else."

The cultural differences made for a difficult adjustment to living here. Clark said she "went down into quite a slump" before eventually convincing her partner to move to the Sunshine Coast, where she said she now feels a much stronger sense of community.

Megan Sutherland, registered clinical social worker and owner of Willow Tree Counselling

Clinical social worker Megan Sutherland says most of her clients are newcomers to Vancouver. The most common complaint she hears from them is that this city is "very cliquey."

"I think it's quite true," she said. "We often associate with people we have long histories with, and it can be difficult to break into new social networks."

For some people, Sutherland said the skewed work-life balance that comes with living in Vancouver makes it difficult to make friends and maintain relationships. She said she has heard from clients who say they often don't get off work until 8 or 9 p.m.

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Get your fun-time fix at Festival du Bois

Coquitlam.
26th anniversary celebrations start tonight and run until Sunday at Mackin Park

BACKSTAGE PASS
Graeme McRanor
vancouver@metronews.ca

Genevieve Toupin is among the performers at the 26th annual Festival du Bois, at Mackin Park in Coquitlam. CONTRIBUTED

No time for meandering ledes this week folks as there's just too much going on. (I can tell you're all crushed)

First up, Festival du Bois, which will be celebrating its 26th anniversary this year when it opens tonight and runs until Sunday at Mackin Park in Coquitlam.

Tons of stuff to do for the whole family at this one. Lots of music — from traditional to modern — a kids' tent, a workshop tent and plenty of delicious food.

Last year, my son and I drove out to the festival just for the poutine. (Note: It's good.)

More information at FestivalduBois.ca.

Let's keep the arts train rolling with Gymnopedies & Henri Michaux: Mouvements, which is on tonight and tomorrow night at the Vancouver Playhouse.

Veteran Montreal-based choreographer Marie Chouinard returns with a two-part interpretation of the work of two French artists: Erik Satie and Henri Micaux.

Tickets starts at $35. Visit DanceHouse.ca for more information.

Next up: Mozart. Seven Tyrants Theatre presents Mozart & Salieri at the Jericho Arts Centre (1675 Discovery Street) from March 4 to 14.

This is David Newham's adaptation of Alexander Pushkin's original that divides the classic into five new sections, something Newham refers to as "theatrical fantasies."

Mozart & Salieri stars Masae Day as "Mozart," Cate Richardson as "The Player" and David Whitely as "Salieri."

More information at SevenTyrants.com.

Last but certainly far from least (and happening tonight), it's the next segment in the Chan Centre's Beyond Words series, which sees magician David Gifford performing live illusions throughout an evening of readings from award-winning novelist Steven Galloway, reading from his latest novel, The Confabulist.

"It's neither a reading nor a magic show but a hybrid of the two," says Chan Centre programming manager, Wendy Atkinson.

"Our hope is that while the audience observes the magic tricks performed in front of their own eyes that they will delve deeper into some of the themes that gracefully unfold in Steven's book — such as the limitations of memory, reality versus imagination, and the scam of spiritualism in the early 20th century."

Beyond Words: Steven Galloway with magician David Gifford is tonight at — deep breath — the Telus Studio Theatre at the Chan Centre for the Performing Arts at UBC.

Tickets are $15 to $27. More information at ChanCentre.com.

Five things to do this weekend:

- ***Eat some bugs***
  What: Seattle bug chef David George Gordon is appearing at the Hawkers Market event in Mount Pleasant.
  Where: 188 Kingsway
  When: Saturday: 5 p.m. until late
  Tickets: $10 at hawkersmarket.com

Bug chef David George Gordon is in town Saturday. CONTRIBUTED

- ***MonsterMonsterMonster trucks***
  What: The Maple Leaf Monster Jam Tour returns to Vancouver.
  Where: BC Place
  When: Saturday; gates open at 5:30 p.m., show starts at 7 p.m.
  Tickets: $25-$125 ($10 for kids) at ticketmaster.ca

- ***Sam Roberts Band***
  What: Canadian rockers Sam Roberts Band with guests The River and The Road and Pigeon Park.
  Where: Commodore Ballroom (868 Granville St.)
  When: Friday and Saturday, doors open at 7 p.m.

- ***Stars***
  What: Canadian indie powerhouse Stars with guests Hey Rosetta! All ages.
  Where: Vogue Theatre (918 Granville St.)
  When: Friday and Saturday, doors open at 7 p.m.
  Tickets: $35 at tickets.northerntickets.com

- ***Laugh with Simon King***
  What: Vancouver-based comedian Simon King headlines with Julien Dionne as feature comic.
  Where: The Comedy MIX (1015 Burrard St.)
  When: Friday and Saturday, 8 p.m. and 10:30 p.m.
  Tickets: $18 Friday, $20 Saturday

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Sawmill operators agree to safety plan

Labour. After four deaths and 40 injuries in 2012, special adviser says new commitment has been reached

Sawmill operators in B.C. have committed to a safety plan following two separate explosions that killed four workers and injured 40 others in 2012, says a special adviser appointed by the government.

Gord Macatee took on the task last July to review safety operations at the province's sawmills.

His mission also involved overhauling investigation and inspection methods at WorkSafeBC after flawed techniques were cited by the Crown for its decision not to lay criminal charges in both cases.

Quoted

"Hopefully, it's much safer than it's ever been in the past and it will stay that way."

Special adviser Gord Macatee

The threat of combustible sawdust at mills was highlighted as a safety issue that required constant vigilance.

"I see evidence of a serious commitment to managing this risk on an ongoing basis," Macatee said Wednesday.

He said sawmills have committed to a daily inspection routine reporting weekly to WorkSafeBC, which would also conduct regular on-site inspections. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Crown counsel had described the WorkSafeBC investigation into the 2012 sawmill explosion at Babine Forest Products as flawed. JONATHAN HAYWARD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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HMCS Annapolis

Decaying warship could sink any time, says reef society

A deteriorating former warship from the 1960s is on "borrowed time," with only months to go before it could sink accidentally, a Federal Court has heard.

A lawyer for the Artificial Reef Society of B.C. said Wednesday that the vessel must be towed from Long Bay to Halkett Bay Marine Park on Gambier Island to be sunk to create an artificial reef for divers and marine life.

The HMCS Annapolis could sink on its own, warranting a $2-million clean-up bill, Bryan Hicks argued.

"Not only would it be an environmental catastrophe ... but also it would create danger for boat traffic in that area," he said.

The reef society was in court to fight an application by the Save Halkett Bay Marine Park Society to stop the planned sinking of the ship.

The Save Halkett Bay group, formed by concerned residents, argues that the ship contains toxic chemicals and its planned sinking would pollute the waters and damage marine life. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Pink Shirt Day for everyone

About 50 students from Nelson Elementary in East Vancouver converged on Adanac Park Lodge on Wednesday and performed a Pink Shirt Day dance for residents. Pink Shirt Day aims to prevent bullying. CONTRIBUTED

An uncanny resemblance?

A Google satellite image of the Newmarket Health Centre, a long-term care facility in Ontario, is going viral with some publications in the United Kingdom and adult magazine Playboy, suggesting it "resembles a man with a dangling penis." To many, the building looks like a man with his legs spread and his genitals exposed. Media outlets and readers on social-media sites have been giggling over the picture since it came to light. The Region of York, which owns the building, was unable to track down the name of the clever architect who came up with the X-rated design in 1951.

PHOTO: GOOGLE MAPS

TEXT: TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Kane community

Four children dead in Manitoba blaze

A mother was able to save three of her children, but four others died in an early morning house fire Wednesday in the rural municipality of Morris.

The fire broke out near the tiny community of Kane, about 95 kilometres southwest of Winnipeg.

"The adults escaped. The three youngest children were saved by the mother. The four older children who were in the second level of a two-storey home perished in the blaze," said Ralph Groening, reeve for the RM of Morris.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Election

Tories considering five debates

Conservatives are considering a proposal to hold up to five regional televised debates in the federal election to contrast PM Stephen Harper's experience with Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau's. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

'Challenging' talks are expected at roundtable

Ottawa. Discussions will include aboriginal and government representatives, as well as families of missing, murdered women

Getting Canada's Aboriginal Peoples, the provinces and territories and the federal government to gather together in the same room is no small feat.

But familiar sticking points are sure to return during this week's roundtable meeting on the issue of murdered and missing aboriginal women — particularly when it comes to deciding who will pay for and administer the parts of a plan to end the violence.

That could result in some "challenging discussions" among the groups when they gather Friday in the ballroom of a downtown Ottawa hotel, Assembly of First Nations national chief Perry Bellegarde said Wednesday.

"It'll be the jurisdictional piece — who's paying from the feds and the provinces, who's responsible, you know, in terms of financial investments. That's going to be an issue and ongoing, where the resources are coming from," Bellegarde said in an interview.

"The who, what, when and why, when it comes to the administration of it."

Both Bellegarde and Northwest Territories Premier Bob McLeod, who is chairing the meeting, say most of the details of the plan have already been worked out, and Friday's meeting will mostly be about putting on the finishing touches.

But there are still big question marks — including who pays for what.

The roundtable will bring together families of missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls, groups representing First Nations, Inuit and Métis and representatives of the provinces, territories and the federal government.

Four premiers — McLeod, Ontario's Kathleen Wynne, Greg Selinger of Manitoba and Yukon's Darrell Pasloski — are scheduled to attend. The Conservative government, meanwhile, has tapped Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt and Status of Women Minister Kellie Leitch to take part.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Key themes

The agenda has been whittled down to three key themes: prevention and awareness; community safety; and policing measures and justice responses.

- Talk will inevitably turn to a full-blown national inquiry on murdered and missing aboriginal women and girls — something that most people in the room agree is needed but which remains a no-go for the Conservatives.

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Eastern Europe

Canada considers joining U.S.-led military training mission in Ukraine

The Harper cabinet is actively and seriously considering whether Canada should join the U.S. and Britain in a military training mission to shore up embattled Ukrainian troops, Defence Minister Jason Kenney said Wednesday.

Britain said Wednesday that it would send 75 military trainers to Ukraine next month to provide instruction and training in military intelligence, logistics and battlefield medical procedures.

Kenney, who had already dropped broad hints of further Canadian involvement in concert with allies, said Canada is considering a similar commitment, with an emphasis on combat medical evacuation and trauma care. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Toronto

Bids for Ford's tie reach $1,925, rising

Rob Ford has more items up for auction on eBay, including what appears to be the tie he wore on Nov. 5, 2013, when he admitted to smoking crack cocaine.

In the eBay description, the former Toronto mayor says the tie is the "only one of these in existence" and features logos from NFL teams past and present.

By Wednesday night the tie had been bid up to about $1,925 and continued to rise.

Ford became notorious when he admitted having smoked crack cocaine, "probably in one of my drunken stupors," while insisting he was not an addict. Other items up for auction include a Saskatchewan Roughriders jersey and patterned pants he was photographed wearing on a shopping trip to Walmart. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Plant a milkweed for monarchs

A monarch butterfly spreads its wings as it feeds on the flowers of a butterfly bush in Omaha, Neb. A concerted national effort to plant the unloved milkweed is needed to reverse a precipitous decline in the monarch butterfly population, conservationists say. They're hoping the federal government will step up with money and moral suasion to aid in an effort they say needs to include power-line, road and rail agencies. Estimates are that the migratory monarchs have declined by 90 per cent across North America over the past two decades, in part because of the eradication of milkweed, the only food plant the butterflies use as caterpillars. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

Defining age of youth proves to be a challenge

Just a number? 'Youth seems to be extending infinitely as kids move back into their parents' homes and become dependent again,' says education professor

The federal Canadian Heritage Department devoted a two-page briefing note to the existential question of how to define youth and concluded it was not so much a specific age range as an ever-evolving stage of life.

"Traditionally, youth might be considered adults upon reaching the age of majority.... However, academic literature indicates that youth transitions have now been extended among youth worldwide. Most youth are not becoming independent adults until their mid-20s or even early 30s," said the Sept. 15 memo prepared for the deputy minister of Canadian Heritage and released through an Access to Information request.

Joel Westheimer, a professor of education at the University of Ottawa, said youth has always been tough to define, even more so in the age of so-called boomerang kids.

"Youth seems to be extending infinitely as kids move back into their parents' homes and become dependent again.... People are delaying launching their regularly scheduled life for longer and longer, but that unfortunately is coupled with a trend in our culture to undervalue youth and have low expectations of youth contributions," Westheimer said.

The briefing note also talks about how the changing job market means internships remain relevant well past the undergraduate years. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Government programs

The note lists a number of government-funded programs geared to youth that define the age group in vastly different ways.

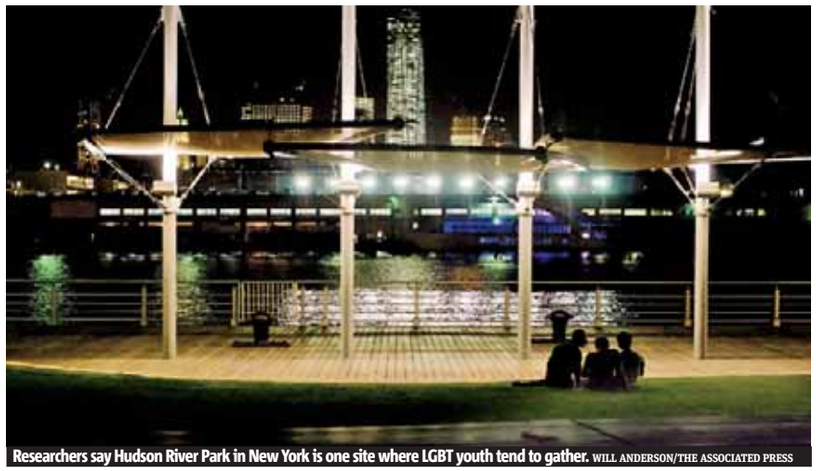
Study details lives of young LGBT sex workers

N.Y.C. Study interviews youth who cope with poverty by engaging in 'survival sex'

A unique federally funded study offers a detailed look at the lives of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth in New York City who engage in sex work.

In extensive interviews conducted over three years by the Urban Institute, 283 young people spoke about experiencing family rejection, establishing support networks with groups of their peers and learning how to subsist on earnings from sexual encounters. Many said there were positive aspects to their lives, but a large majority expressed a yearning to get out of the sex business.

"They don't see themselves as victims ... but it's not empowering for them to be doing this," said Meredith Dank, the report's lead author. "These are kids in very desperate situations who will do what they need to do to be able to survive."



Researchers say Hudson River Park in New York is one site where LGBT youth tend to gather. WILL ANDERSON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The U.S. study, funded by the Justice Department's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, focused on youth between 15 and 21, although a handful of participants were older. Of the respondents, 47 per cent identified as male, 36 per cent as female and 16 per cent as transgender. About 90 per cent were black, Latino or multiracial, and nearly 60 per cent said they lived either in a shelter or on the street, often after being kicked out of their homes or aging out of foster care.

One gay 19-year-old told an interviewer how his mother had forced him to leave home.

"She didn't want me being gay. She wanted grandchildren. She didn't like my lifestyle," he said. "She still loved me but she just didn't want me being there."

On average, the youths saw three to six customers each day or night — 11 to 18 a week — during periods when they were engaging in sexual transactions, according to the study. The prices that they reported charging per encounter ranged from about $90 to $230, and income per day generally ranged from about $355 to $735.

About 90 per cent of the youths spoke of things they disliked about engaging in the sex trade — saying their work made them feel frustrated, dirty or endangered. Only seven per cent of respondents said they had no desire to stop engaging in the activity.

However, more than 80 per cent said there were positive aspects — notably helping meet their basic needs and in some cases fostering a sense of community.

The report offered several recommendations for steps that might encourage such young people to disengage from the sex trade, including new programs that would offer safe housing, appropriate health care and a pathway to job opportunities. Any such services would be most effective if designed with the particular needs of LGBT youth in mind, the report said.

The Urban Institute, a nonpartisan public-policy think-tank based in Washington, D.C., did not attempt its own calculations of the overall number of LGBT youth engaged in the New York City's commercial sex market. Its report cited earlier studies, estimating the number at between 2,500 and 4,000 young people of all sexual orientations. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Details

Among the report's main findings:

- Many of the youths reported frustrating experiences with social-services systems and providers, which often failed to help them find safe housing and adequate health care.
- Many participants have large peer networks, including other youth who engage in the sex business and help them.
- Complaints of violence and abuse were commonplace, inflicted by relatives, clients, peers, law-enforcement officers and others. But many youths displayed resilience.

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Three arrested for plot to join ISIL in Syria

U.S. Roughly 20 people charged in past year with planning to travel to Middle East to fight alongside militants

Three men were arrested Wednesday on charges of plotting to travel to Syria to join ISIL and wage war against the U.S., and federal officials said one of them spoke of shooting President Barack Obama or planting a bomb on Coney Island.

Akhror Saidakhmetov was arrested at Kennedy Airport, where he was attempting to board a flight to Istanbul, authorities said. Abdurasul Hasanovich Juraboev had a ticket to travel to Istanbul next month and was arrested in Brooklyn, federal prosecutors said. Abror Habibov, 30, accused of helping fund Saidakhmetov's efforts, was arrested in Florida.

They are charged with attempt and conspiracy to provide material support to a terrorist organization. If convicted, each faces a maximum of 15 years in prison.

"This is real," said William Bratton, commissioner of the New York Police Department. "This is the concern about the lone wolf, inspired to act without ever going to the Mideast."

The Justice Department has charged roughly 20 people in the past year with planning to travel to the Middle East to fight alongside militants like ISIL. Federal officials have been concerned about Americans going overseas to train with these groups and returning with plots to carry out attacks at home. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Northeastern Syria

Attacks

ISIL militants have moved a large group of Christians they abducted to one of their strongholds as fighting raged on Wednesday between the extremists and Kurdish and Christian militiamen for control of a chain of villages along a strategic river in northeastern Syria, activists and state-run media said.

In pre-dawn attacks, the ISIL on Monday attacked communities nestled along the river, seizing at least 70 people, including many women and children. Thousands of others fled to safer areas.

Polanski appears at extradition hearing

Filmmaker Roman Polanski, second from right, with his lawyers, arrives at the regional court in his childhood city of Krakow, Poland, Wednesday. Polanski appeared for a hearing concerning a U.S. request for his extradition related to charges of sex with a minor — a case that has haunted him since 1977. Judge Dariusz Mazur took almost nine hours questioning Polanski and his Polish attorneys. He was not expected to make a ruling on Wednesday and scheduled another hearing, buying time to study documents that arrived this week from Switzerland, which in 2010 refused to extradite Polanski. ALIK KEPLICZ/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ISIL

Egyptians flee Libya by thousands

An Egyptian border official says some 20,000 Egyptians have fled Libya since the release of a grisly beheading video by Islamic State militants. The video, showing the beheading of 21 Egyptian Christians, prompted Cairo to launch retaliatory airstrikes. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Afghanistan

Avalanches bury homes, kill scores

Avalanches caused by a heavy winter snow killed at least 124 people in northeastern Afghanistan, an emergency official said Wednesday, as rescuers clawed through debris with their hands to save those buried beneath. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Chris Kyle killing

Jurors reject insanity defence

Jurors who rejected an insanity defence and convicted former Marine Eddie Ray Routh in the deaths of famed "American Sniper" author Chris Kyle and his friend said Wednesday the man's past behaviour undermined his argument that he couldn't tell right from wrong. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Writers see e-ink on the wall

As printed books trend downward and e-books take their place, Metro looks at how contemporary authors get paid, or not

LUKE SIMCOE
Metro in Toronto

Last week, Canada's biggest authors penned a strongly worded letter to the country's biggest library. Writers such as Margaret Atwood and Vincent Lam were rattling pens in protest of policy that allowed the Toronto Public Library to purchase used copies of best-selling titles from the public.

The library claimed the program was needed to reduce waiting lists for popular books, but to the 31 authors who signed the letter, it was another blow to a publishing industry already reeling from "great technological and social change."

"Were the program expanded, we believe it would do harm to writers and publishers depending upon slim and diminishing revenues of their own," the letter read.

Strong words, but are they true? In an age of e-books, Amazon and self-publishing success stories, Metro opens the book on how contemporary writers and publishers are — or aren't — getting paid.

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$9.7M
The amount paid out to Canadian authors in 2014 through the Public Lending Rights Commission.

Believe it or not, authors in Canada are compensated for having their books in libraries. In addition to the royalties they receive when a library buys their book, they also receive an annual payment from the Public Lending Rights Commission.

The system checks a library's catalogue and notes the presence of a book. Currently, authors get paid the same whether there's one copy or 100 on the shelves, but those who administer the program are looking to change that.

Copyright

Authors are also paid when their works are copied or used by governments, educational institutions or businesses. In Canada, most of this money is collected and distributed by a group known as Access Copyright.

However, John Degen, director of the Writers' Union of Canada, said recent changes to the Copyright Act, such as granting schools greater exemptions, have negatively affected how much money is flowing to authors. Between 2013 and 2014, he said Access Copyright payments went down nearly 30 per cent. "We've watched a steady decline in the annual average earnings for authors," Degen said. "And I'm sure there are authors in Canada that have just given up because they can't earn a living."

Advances and royalties

The book publishing industry still functions much as it did before the arrival of the Internet.

Once an author inks a deal with a publisher, he or she is given a cash advance — the more popular a book is expected to be, the larger the advance — and hopes to collect royalties from sales.

According to John Degen (pictured below), director of the Writers' Union of Canada, royalties are set at between 10 and 15 per cent of a book's retail price. Only a select few in Canada earn a living from royalties, Degen said, with most "cobbling together income" from other writing gigs and appearances.

"The reality is that most books don't earn out their advance," he said, noting advances have gotten smaller as publishers become more risk-averse.

"The industry has survived by consolidating and tightening up their contracts," he said. "You need a serious track record of blockbuster sales to get an advance that will give you a living."

$10,000
Average earnings from writing made by Canadian authors, according to the Writers' Union of Canada.

Amazon

Amazon accounted for 40 per cent of global book sales in 2014, according to Publishers Weekly.

Degen said some authors see the online retailer's low prices as a race to the bottom, while others are embracing the site as a platform for self-publishing.

"Publishers used to be the gatekeepers and the authors were the supplicants, saying 'please publish my book,'" he said. "But now, you can avoid the publishing industry altogether."

Authors who retain their digital rights can sell e-books directly through Amazon and get royalties as high as 75 per cent. Degen believes that is forcing publishers to take better care of their writers.

"We look after our writers as best we can," said House of Anansi's Matt Williams. "It's about more than printing their books. We look after publicity tours and exploit other rights for film as best we can."

E-books

In 2012, the Ontario Media Development Corporation estimated 15 per cent of book sales in Canada were in digital formats, a number expected to at least double by 2018.

House of Anansi vice-president Matt Williams says electronic books cost his firm about 20 per cent less to make than printed books. The result has been higher profits for publishers and higher royalties for authors.

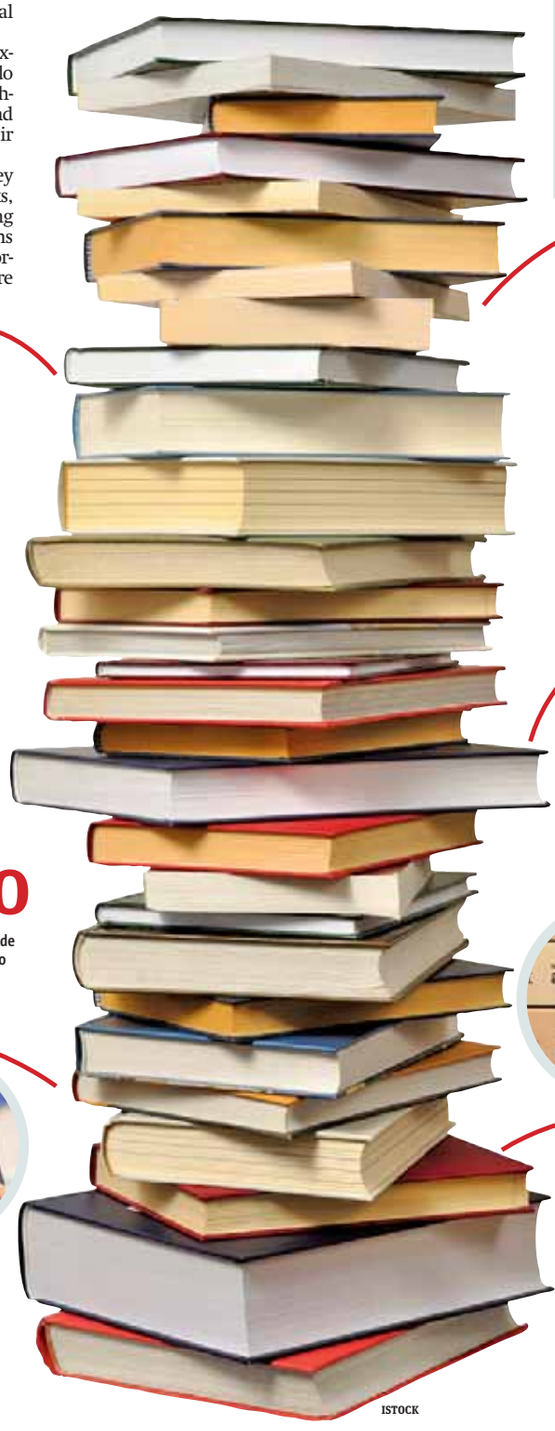
E-book royalties start around 25 per cent, but John Degen, director of the Writers' Union of Canada, says his organization is pushing for more from publishers.

"We've done our own math and we don't see the justification for only 25 per cent," he said. "The cost of making the product is just so much lower."

The future

The Ontario Media Development Corporation says the Canadian publishing industry is still growing at around 1.5 per cent per year. Sales of print books are trending downward, but those losses are offset by the growing e-book market.

"The industry isn't going anywhere," Williams said. "It's contracting in some areas, but it's sure as hell growing in others."



ISTOCK

Fight for Keystone XL not yet a pipe dream

Bill vetoed. Obama rejected legislation but says he's reserving judgment on project until review complete

Delayed but not dead: That's the verdict on the fate of the Keystone XL pipeline after U.S. President Barack Obama vetoed a bill to allow construction of the $8 billion cross-border project to go ahead.

The future of the proposal by Calgary-based TransCanada Corp. to carry hundreds of thousands of barrels a day of Alberta oil sands to refineries in Texas is far from decided, observers said.

Obama rejected the Republican-sponsored Congressional bill Tuesday, saying he's reserving judgment on the pipeline until a U.S. State Department review of the project is completed. The six-year review is expected to wind up in a matter of weeks.

TransCanada's president and chief executive officer Russ Girling said in a statement the company remains "fully committed" to the project and "will keep working in good faith" with U.S. regulators, including the Environmental Protection Agency.

Canada's Natural Resources Minister Greg Rickford said the federal government, a pipeline proponent, believes the project will eventually get the go ahead south of the border.

But environmental activists and Midwestern U.S. landowners and native groups opposed to the project said the interim veto is another encouraging sign Obama will ultimately reject the proposal outright. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

Opponents of Keystone XL pipeline celebrate the veto by U.S. President Barack Obama outside the White House in Washington. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Budget. More money for vets, projections suggest

The Harper government's road map to this year's federal budget suggests it is prepared to pour more money into programs and services for the country's veterans, while largely holding the line on defence spending.

Treasury Board President Tony Clement released the 2015-16 spending estimates on Tuesday, even though it's unclear when the budget will be tabled.

The government has been under mounting political pressure to improve the suite of benefits and entitlements for ex-soldiers.

The estimates, which are not the final word on the budget, project modest increases in the amount spent on disability awards and supplementary benefits.

Despite that, overall spending at Veterans Affairs is expected to decline by 1.5 per cent — or $54 million — next year, something federal officials attribute to the declining number of Second World War and Korean War veterans.

Final fiscal plan

The Conservative government's final fiscal plan before this year's election was postponed until at least April by Finance Minister Joe Oliver, who said he needed the time to assess the impact of collapsing oil prices.

Veterans Affairs Canada spends just over $3.5 billion per year.

Over at National Defence, another politically charged portfolio, spending is expected to increase by 1.5 per cent — $280 million — in the coming year, bringing the military budget to $18.9 billion.

Officials say they will be saving $709.2 million in capital costs, some of which is likely related to the cancellation of the army's plans for a close-combat vehicle and delays in acquiring maritime helicopters for the air force. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

The Harper government's road map to this year's federal budget — delayed by Finance Minister Joe Oliver, pictured, to assess the impact of falling oil prices — suggests it is prepared to pour more money into programs and services for veterans, while largely holding the line on defence spending. CHRIS YOUNG/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Patent dispute

U.S. jury orders Apple to pay $532.9 million

Apple has been ordered to pay nearly $533 million US by a federal jury that found Apple's iTunes music store uses software that infringes on patents held by a Texas company.

An attorney for plaintiff Smartflash LLC praised the verdict. Apple immediately announced plans to appeal and said the case shows the need for Congress to reform the U.S. patent system.

The case involves three patents that Smartflash holds for software used in storing data files and managing access through an online payment system.

The jury agreed with Smartflash's argument that Apple used software based on ideas patented by inventor and Smartflash executive Peter Racz, without permission. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Market Minute

DOLLAR 80.50¢ (+0.47¢)

TSX 15,228.57 (+63.60)

OIL $50.99 US (+$1.71)

GOLD $1,201.50 US (+$4.20)

Natural gas: $2.894 (-0.8¢)
Dow Jones: 18,224.57 (+15.38)

Retailers. TJX follows Wal-Mart in hiking pay

The owner of T.J. Maxx, Marshalls and Home Goods stores said Wednesday it will boost pay for its U.S. workers to at least $9 US per hour.

The announcement by TJX Cos. comes a week after Wal-Mart Stores Inc. said it would increase wages for its employees and is a sign that more competitors may follow suit. Low-paying retailers are having a harder time retaining workers as the job market improves.

"This pay initiative is an important part of our strategies to continue attracting and retaining the best talent," CEO Carol Meyrowitz said in a statement.

A recent Credit Suisse report estimates TJX's current hourly pay at about $8.24 US. The federal minimum wage is $7.25 US per hour.

TJX said hourly workers will start to receive the pay increase in June. In 2016, the company plans to pay all associates who have worked at its stores for more than six months at least $10 US per hour.

The company's 191,000 associates around the world restock shelves, greet customers and ring up purchases at the cash register.

Wal-Mart Inc., the world's largest retailer, is raising entry level wages in its Walmart stores to at least $9 an hour in April and to at least $10 an hour by February of next year. Wal-Mart said the change will affect about 500,000 workers.

Also this year, Swedish furniture seller Ikea gave workers at its U.S. division a 17 per cent average raise to $10.76 US an hour. And clothing chain Gap Inc. raised its minimum hourly wage to $9 US last year and to $10 US this year. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

VOICES

SAVING FACE

In an effort to showcase diversity with their new emojis, Apple has upset a lot of people. Why does it seem like companies' efforts to be politically correct always backfire?

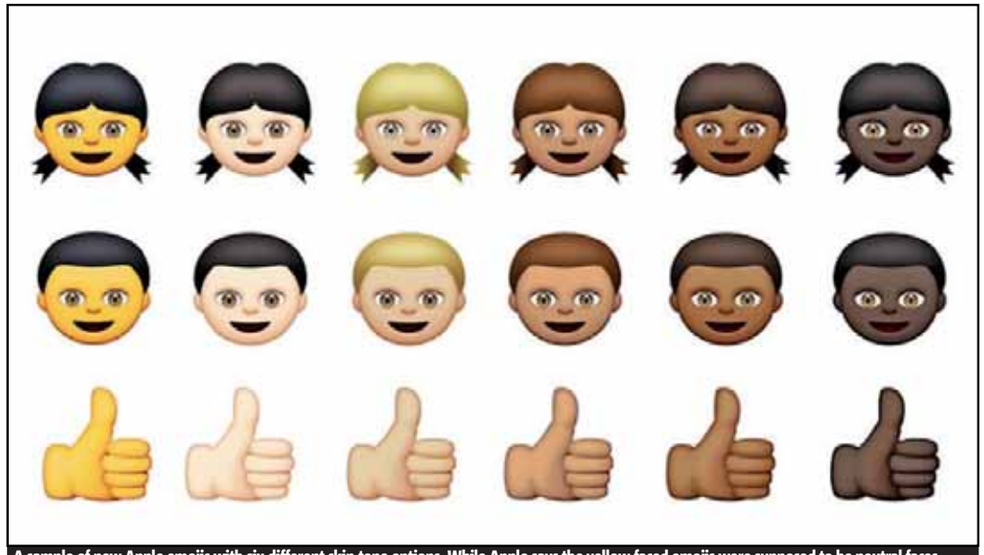
JUSTIN LEE
readers@metronews.ca

Apple unveiled this week a new set of emojis — featuring six different skin tones — coming with its latest update to iOS and OSX. At the end of the proverbial racial rainbow is, in fact, a pot of gold: a luminous yellow face. The move has upset Asian communities around the world, who are criticizing the inclusion of the yellow emoji on social media.

Surely Apple — whose U.S. workforce is 23 per cent Asian — must have seen this backlash coming, considering the long history of racist connotations in describing Asians as "yellow."

But regardless of their approach, the outcome — and outrage — would probably have been the same. Apple's good intentions to be more politically correct would have likely offended someone in the end anyway.

Apple claims the yellow-skinned emojis are not meant to portray Asians, but instead, all the faces are intended to be ethnically neutral — an extension of the smiley-face characters, I suppose. But wouldn't "ghost white" have been more appropriate, without running the risk of it being misconceived as representing an entire race?



A sample of new Apple emojis with six different skin-tone options. While Apple says the yellow-faced emojis were supposed to be neutral faces not depicting any specific race, they've upset many in the Asian community. SCREENGRAB

To their credit, I'm sure Apple was going for a cyber version of the racially harmonious It's a Small World Disney ride, minus the creepy animatronics. In other words, it was trying to play it safe while appealing to a need for a more inclusive representation of all races and ethnicities.

Just imagine the outrage if Apple had included stereotypical facial characteristics, costumes and accompanying props for each race. You know, like the It's a Small World Disney ride.

But maybe this whole thing brings up the larger issue of Western society's constant need to be political correct, and how it can, in fact, worsen the situation.

This fear of offending others by attempting to be more inclusive of all ethnicities and races can often lead to mixed results.

For example, think about the last commercial you saw for a cellphone provider or fast-food restaurant. You know, the one where a group of 20-something faux-hipsters are really enjoying themselves? In every one of these advertisements, there will be — without fail — a carefully calculated, ethnically diverse representation of actors: two white men, two white women, one Asian woman and one black dude. It's not always this exact combination, but you get my point.

The end result feels forced, an obligatory nod to political correctness wherein advertisers can fly under the radar of ethnic activist groups by simply including a couple of visible minorities to round out a mostly all-Caucasian group.

Sometimes over-thinking, just like under-thinking, can lead to unintentionally racist results. And then you're forced to backtrack by saving (yellow) face. Have a nice day.

Justin Lee is a Toronto-based writer, DJ and documentary filmmaker who enjoys exploring music, arts and culture and social issues.

Great that Brown barred, but let's really give him the kiss-off

MELISSA DUNNE
readers@metronews.ca

It's not every day I feel like giving our immigration officials a high five.

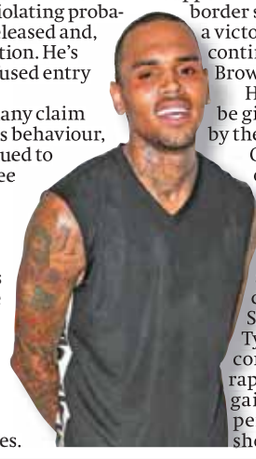
But when news broke that singer Chris Brown was denied entry at our border earlier this week, I felt a surge of patriotic pride.

Our country essentially gave the middle finger to a man who infamously beat singer Rihanna's face to a pulp and yet still makes millions a year as an entertainer.

While the promoter of his concerts in Montreal and Toronto said in a statement the shows were cancelled due to "immigration issues," it likely had more to do with Brown's history of violence. Since he pleaded guilty to felony assault for beating up Rihanna in 2009, he has been embroiled in scandal after scandal.

Just last year after subsequent arrests, Brown was ordered to serve jail time for violating probation before being released and, again, put on probation. He's previously been refused entry into the U.K.

And yet while many claim to be sickened by his behaviour, legions have continued to dole out money to see him perform, and venues continue to host his shows. The stomach-churning photos of Rihanna's bruised visage have not stopped people from buying his albums and going to his concerts — or the music industry from handing him awards and accolades.



In a way, the industry condones his behaviour by continuing to support him. Which is why the border stymie seems like such a victory to those of us who continue to be disgusted by Brown.

He is not the only star to be given the cold shoulder by the True North.

Over the years, everyone from rapper Lil Wayne to actor Wes Bentley to domestic goddess Martha Stewart have been turned away due to their criminal records.

Somehow boxer Mike Tyson, who has been convicted of assault and rape, controversially gained entry last year to perform his one-man show in Toronto.

Like Brown, grotesque behaviour did not stop the boxer from commanding large paycheques and crowds.

Despite the actions of Canadian border officials, Brown will continue to make money.

He ominously tweeted: "The good people of the Canadian government wouldn't allow me entry. I'll be back this summer and will hopefully see all my Canadian fans!"

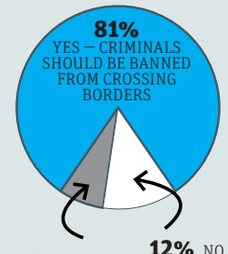
The 25-year-old will likely eventually be back here to perform, unless no one buys tickets to his concerts.

So, fellow Canucks, let's give the Kiss Kiss singer the ultimate kiss-off and stop buying what this awful man is selling.

Melissa Dunne is a freelance writer based in Toronto.

Poll:

SHOULD CHRIS BROWN HAVE BEEN STOPPED FROM ENTERING CANADA?



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Gossip

NED EHRBAR

METRO'S TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Not doing her time

So remember when Lindsay Lohan's lawyer rushed in proof that she had completed her probation-mandated community service hours while in London? Yeah, about that. As it turns out, Lohan got a little, let's say, creative with what constitutes community service.

According to TMZ, her community service included performing in the West End in Speed-the-Plow, meeting fans afterward and letting kids follow her around. What a mensch. "On one day Lindsay got six hours' credit," prosecutor Terry White complains. "Two of the hours were for her matinee performance and another two were for her evening performance. The remaining two were for a meet-and-greet afterwards." Looks like her selfless giving could land her a probation violation.

Lindsay Lohan ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Is Jamie all done with the whips?

Fifty Shades of Grey is still busy making all of the money, but apparently no amount of success is enough to please star Jamie Dornan, who is reportedly mulling an early exit from the franchise before they can get to adapting the second and third book, according to Australia's NW magazine.

Dornan is said to be wrestling with an intense distaste for all things Grey, and isn't eager to shave off all his facial and chest hair once again and make with flogging Dakota Johnson, according to an anonymous source. "Jamie does not think his performance was bad. Instead he blames Dakota and says it wasn't possible to have chemistry with her," the source insists. "He says Dakota gave him nothing to work with." So I guess his solution is to return the favour?

Jamie Dornan certainly has chemistry with his wife, Amelia Warner.

Conan's got a date with Grindr

Never let it be said Conan O'Brien doesn't suffer for his fans' enjoyment. After successfully navigating Tinder with coach Dave Franco, O'Brien now turns to the gay side with Grindr, the "socializing" app favoured by men seeking men. Along for the ride to help him out is comedian Billy Eichner. Enjoy as O'Brien tries out life as a sugar daddy.

Liza Powel O'Brien and husband Conan O'Brien

What did Ben really say to J.Lo?

Apparently something we all missed at the Oscars was a run-in between exes Ben Affleck and Jennifer Lopez, both on hand to present awards. During a commercial break, Affleck apparently whispered something in Lopez's ear, earning him a playful sock in the arm from his Gigli co-star. And much like Bill Murray and Scarlett Johansson in Lost in Translation, we're burning with curiosity as to what he said. Since there's no way to really know, how about some baseless speculation? By all means:

- "I've seen Boy Next Door 17 times."
- "Once you go Affleck, you never go back-fleck."
- "Sometimes I accidentally call my wife by your name."
- "We still use Gigli as our safe word."

Ben Affleck and Jennifer Lopez

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SHOPPERS DRUG MART

Futuristic Canadian writer Margaret Atwood will try her hand at micro-storytelling during the third Twitter Fiction Festival. AFP FILE

Twit fic fest celebrates new forms of storytelling

Multimedia. Do you like very, very short stories? This festival of micro publishing may be right up your alley

Lemony Snicket, Margaret Atwood and Jackie Collins will all experiment with micro-publishing during the third Twitter Fiction Festival, which has been announced for May 11 to 15.

When Twitter hosted its first Fiction Festival in 2012, it had already been home to virtual storytelling experiments by authors such as Jennifer Egan and Teju Cole who had shared new work one tweet at a time. The festival puts that storytelling trend in the spotlight and last year featured authors such as Alexander McCall Smith, who offered up four short stories over the course of the festival.

Among other 2014 highlights, American comedians Jim Gaffigan and Michael Ian Black improvised a tale of a trip through Scotland, and Tom Mitchell led a choose-your-own-adventure-style story through London.

On board for 2015 is a roster of more than 20 featured authors, including Chuck Wendig, Beth Cato, Matthew Dunn, Sophie Jordan, Lauren Beukes and Jonathan Evison, with a collective expertise that extends into spy fiction, politics and graphic novels.

Join in

- Starting March 2, anyone can submit an idea for a chance to be a featured participant. Once the event starts, all can take part using the hashtag #TwitterFiction.

The event's website, twitterfictionfestival.com, offers suggestions of formats and tools to use to create your fiction, including generating collaborative fiction via crowdsourcing, launching several handles to tell a narrative through multiple viewpoints or using images and Vine for a multimedia experience. Last year saw Eric Smith create an 8-bit story with illustrator Juan Carlos Solon, while Ankur Thakkar told a love story using Bollywood screenshots.

Inspiration from some of last year's contributors can be found archived on the festival website. An Instant Story Generator provides an option for the less creatively inclined.

Follow developments and the festival itself via @twfictionfest and using the hashtag #TwitterFiction. AFP

New books. Ishiguro heads to post-Roman Britain

A decade after his most recent novel, the dystopian Never Let Me Go, the Japanese-born British author Kazuo Ishiguro is back with The Buried Giant, a tale of love and vengeance in a mythical, troubled Britain.

Ishiguro is the author of six previous novels, among which one of his best-known is 1989's The Remains of the Day, the source for the Merchant Ivory film of the same name. That book earned the author a Man Booker Prize, for which he's been nominated four times.

Never Let Me Go also became a film, having been adapted for Mark Romanek's 2010 movie starring Keira Knightley and Carey Mulligan.

Whether the author's latest effort will make its way to celluloid is unknown, but a few plot details have been revealed by his publisher and in interviews and reviews leading up to its March 3 release.

Publisher Random House described the book's setting as a time when the "Romans have long since departed and Britain is steadily declining into ruin." AFP

Author Kasuo Ishiguro AFP FILE

Ebooks

Pearson travellers to get free book, music downloads

Travellers flying out of Canada's largest airport will have access to a special parting gift: books and music available for free download.

While at Toronto's Pearson International Airport, people will be able to visit a dedicated website to download select ebook titles and individual songs. The content is being provided by HarperCollins Canada and Sony Music Canada.

Cory Beatty, marketing director at HarperCollins Canada, said six books will be available each month: ebook samplers which include excerpts of upcoming books, two classic titles and two best-selling releases.

The first run includes Giller Prize finalist The Betrayers by David Bezmozgis and Us by One Day author David Nicholls, and classic titles The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes and The Great Gatsby.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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LESS IS MORE

The face of this season's fashion month is understated — with models from many must-see shows sporting natural, matte skin, eye colours in earthy tones and a soft, nude lip. Now it's time for you to rule your world's runway.

BADGLEY MISCHKA FASHION SHOW IN NEW YORK. PHOTO: CHELSEA LAUREN / GETTY IMAGES

In recent New York and London fashion weeks, 'au naturel' was the order of the day.

For his Fall 2015 clothing line, Ralph Lauren served up a bevy of effortlessly sophisticated embellishments, tonal hues and rich textures.

The makeup was, in contrast, perfectly wholesome. Lauren's broad spectrum of earthy beauty was a force to be reckoned with — flawless, gleaming skin and untamed brows.

Badgley Mischka models also donned a pale lip that was a contrast to their cat-eye liner. In London this week Burberry unveiled several additions to its cosmetics range.

Models sported warm, matte skin, a sultry smokey eye inspired by natural earthy tones and an understated matte nude lip.

Here are some products to recreate the natural knockout look:

• Whatever your skin tone, it's time to invest in a new performance BB/CC cream like BareMinerals All-In-One BB, CC, Tinted Moisturizer Cream, released last month.

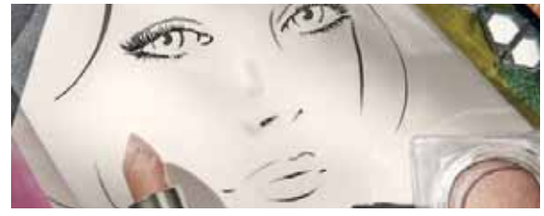
• Lancôme's cushion cream and Diorskin Nude Air serum offer other luxurious complexion-kind options.

• As Burberry girls Kate Moss and Cara Delevingne know, no makeup bag would be complete without Charlotte Tilbury's Magic Cream, originally formulated to help soothe the supermodels' travel-weary skin.

• Inspired by the British luxury label's Patchwork, Pattern and Prints runway show on Monday, Makeup Artistic Consultant Wendy Rowe created Burberry's earthy runway beauty using new Eye Colour Cream shadows in Mink No.102 and Charcoal No.114.

AFP

BURBERRY'S BEAUTIFUL EARTHY MAKEUP PHOTO: AFP



BURBERRY KISSES IN NUDE, THE LIPSTICK BEHIND MODELS' UNDERSTATED POUT. PHOTO: AFP

Prefer a bolder look? Here's how to copy Kim Kardashian

It's no secret that Kim Kardashian loves to wear makeup.

The queen of contouring gave an interview to beauty blog Into the Gloss where she shared a laundry list of her favourite beauty products and tools. She uses Kardashian Beauty Endless Summer Matte Bronzer in Cabana Bronze, and the Anastasia Beverly Hills Contour Kit for her nose and cheeks, she told the Gloss.

Kardashian is also known for her dramatic eyes: she goes to Anastasia Soare of Anastia to get her eyebrows done, and she uses Lancôme Définicils High Definition Mascara along with Kardashian brand false individual lashes. The reality star also said she is crazy about rose-scented products.

Her By Terry Refreshing Cleansing Gel is rose-scented, and so are the Tracie Martin Shakti Resculpting Body Cream and Epicuren Bulgarian Rose Otto rose oil she likes to use.

As for Kardashian's beauty quirks, Baby North's mom owns an LED light therapy machine called Quasar MD Plus to treat the psoriasis on her legs.

She also claimed that she only washes her hair once every five days.

"We start out with a blowout on day one, then we go into a messier vibe the next day, and then we flat iron it and do a really sleek look on day three since that requires a little oil in the hair. Day four could be a slicked-back ponytail, and on the fifth day is when you wash it."

AFP/PHOTO: GETTY

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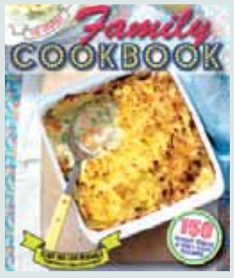
Cookbook of the Week

Get back to family



Got a bunch of hungry kids to feed after school? Need inspiration for Sunday dinner? Reach for The Crumbs Family Cookbook. Written by Claire and Lucy McDonald, it contains 150 recipes that range from comfort food to one-pot dishes even the fussiest of eaters will love. Recipes include Pea and Feta Salad, Very Simple Beef Stew and Tortilla Tower. METRO

Recipe. Expand your breakfast-for-dinner menu with a pie filled with morning staples

Ingredients

- 2 sheets all-butter shortcrust pastry (215 g/7 1/2 oz each sheet)
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 x 400 g (14 oz) tin of baked beans
- Splash of Worcestershire sauce
- 6 good-quality sausages
- 6 rashers/slices of streaky bacon
- 200 g (7 oz) black pudding/blood sausage
- 200 g (21/4 cups) grated Cheddar
- 1 egg
- 20 cm (8 inch) loose-bottomed cake tin

1. Take pastry out of ridge an hour before you need it, otherwise it is difficult to work with and will crack when unrolled.

2. In a large saucepan, gently fry the chopped onions until they are browned. Drain the beans and give them a quick rinse. You want some of the sauce to stick to them, but not too much, otherwise your pie may end up with a 'soggy bottom.' Add to the onions with a splash of Worcestershire sauce and heat through.

3. In a separate pan, fry the bacon and sausages (don't use oil, as they should be fatty enough) until they are browned. Chop the bacon into small pieces and slice the sausages. (Don't forget, this can all be done the night before, and it is also a good way of using up leftovers.) Stir the cooked meat into the bean mixture and season — go easy on the salt as the meat will be salty enough. Crumble in the black pudding.

4. Put cake tin on one of the pastry sheets and cut around with a knife. This is your pie lid. Grease cake tin, line base with baking paper, and then place the remaining pastry sheet inside. Gently push it down, so it is nice and snug around the bottom and the edges. It won't fit perfectly, but if you trim some of the overhang off you can add it where needed. Smooth out any joins with your fingers. It may look like a patchwork quilt, but don't worry, it will still taste delicious. Pour the filling into the pastry case. Sprinkle on the grated cheese. Place the pie lid on top, and pinch to the sides of the pastry case. Beat the egg and brush the lid with it. Either bake or put in fridge.

5. Preheat the oven to 180 C (350 F; gas mark 4). Bake for 50 minutes. If you made it the night before, then try to remember to take it out of the fridge an hour before cooking. If you don't, you will need to up the cooking time slightly.

6. When cooked, remove from the oven and let it stand for 10 minutes, then take the pie in its tin to the table. Balance it on a tin of baked beans and lower the cake tin. People should start to applaud at this point. Transfer to a plate and cut into wedges.

This recipe for Breakfast Pie serves six. STUART WEST

BOTH RECIPES FROM THE CRUMBS FAMILY COOKBOOK BY CLAIRE AND LUCY MCDONALD. CICO BOOKS, $25.95; RYLANDPETERS.COM

Dinner. Gnocchi Bake

"This is the ultimate mid-week supper. It is cheap, filling, quick and delicious.

"I make it every few weeks using up any vegetables that are wilting/stagnating in my fridge," writes Lucy McDonald in the book The Crumbs Family Cookbook.

Ingredients

- 700 g (25 oz) gnocchi
- 680 g (23/4 cups) passata/tomato sauce
- Handful of corn kernels
- Handful of Swiss chard
- 200g (2 cups) shredded mozzarella cheese (or any other)
- Handful of bread crumbs

1. Cook the gnocchi in a pan of boiling water as per the packet instructions. They are ready when they all bob to the top of the pan.

2. Drain and put back in the saucepan (not over the heat) and stir in the passata, sweetcorn and chard. Season. Pour into a 20 x 30cm (8 x 12 inches) baking dish and sprinkle the mozzarella and bread crumbs over the top.

SHORT FORM NOTICE OF HEARING OF SETTLEMENT APPROVAL

DID YOU PURCHASE OR LEASE A TOYOTA VEHICLE?

IF YOU PURCHASED OR LEASED A TOYOTA VEHICLE FROM AN AUTHORIZED TOYOTA DEALERSHIP IN BRITISH COLUMBIA BETWEEN JUNE 12, 2002 AND JUNE 30, 2004, PLEASE READ THIS NOTICE CAREFULLY AS IT MAY AFFECT YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS AND YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR COMPENSATION

A class action lawsuit was initiated in 2004 in British Columbia alleging that Toyota Canada Inc. and its authorized dealerships in British Columbia, defined as Defendants engaged in anticompetitive conduct through implementation of the "Access Program." The lawsuit was certified as a class action.

Toyota denies that it has violated any law, denies that it engaged in any and all wrongdoing, and denies that the Access Program was anticompetitive. The Court has not made any finding as to the truth or merits of the claims or defences asserted by either side. The allegations made by the plaintiffs have not been proven in court.

A Settlement Agreement has been reached. If you purchased or leased a Toyota vehicle from an Authorized Toyota Dealership in British Columbia between June 12, 2002 and June 30, 2004, you may be entitled to compensation. You should immediately review the full legal notice in this matter to ensure that you understand your legal rights. A copy of the full legal notice as well as the Settlement Agreement can be viewed at **www.BCToyotaAccessSettlement.ca** or can be obtained by contacting Class Counsel as listed below. In the event the Settlement is approved, the deadline for opting out will be 60 days prior to the claims deadline and subject to further notice as approved by the Court. Information on how to opt out will be provided at **www.BCToyotaAccessSettlement.ca**. Not all Class Members will be eligible for compensation.

A Settlement Approval Hearing has been scheduled for May 29, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. in the City of Vancouver. At this hearing, the Court will determine whether the Settlement Agreement is fair, reasonable and in the best interests of Class Members.

Class members have the right to object or comment on the settlement. All written submissions received by Class counsel by May 22, 2015, will be considered at the settlement approval hearing. If you support the settlement, you do not have to do anything at this time and further notice will be published following the settlement approval hearing. This will contain details of the procedure to be followed by Class Members making Claims for the issuance of Settlement Vouchers.

Class Counsel can be reached as follows:

Leslie Mackoff
Mackoff & Co
Box 12184
1801-808 Nelson Street
Vancouver, BC V6X 2H2

PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE HAS BEEN AUTHORIZED BY THE SUPREME COURT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Copper stirs up black magic in the kitchen

Glossy cabinets reflect light and help open up small spaces. Grey Abstrakt Kitchen Cabinets, Ikea.ca

Ask a designer. Bright ideas for a reader's tiny kitchen dilemma

DESIGN CENTRE
Karl Lohnes
home@metronews.ca

I desperately need to renovate my small U-shaped condo kitchen this spring. Will shiny surfaces like mirror, stainless and glass help make it appear larger? I am not a fan of stainless steel appliances and am wondering what would look best. — Mark H., Edmonton

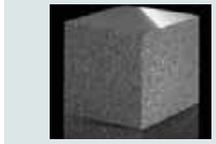
The trick to making a small kitchen look larger is to use consistent colours and tones throughout: either all light, all medium, or all dark. Look for countertops with a glossy finish that will reflect light. Also consider a stone-like surface that features reflective qualities in its design. In a tiny kitchen, use the same product for the backsplash to reduce the variety of finishes needed. This will make the small space appear seamless and less visually choppy.

Appliances can be black, if choosing a darker-looking kitchen, or white if you're going all light. Whichever appliances you choose, match your cupboard doors and floor tiles in similar tones, either black, grey or white.

Again, all surfaces should be shiny or glossy to reflect and bounce light around in a tiny space.

Copper-plated faucets and lighting fixtures will add an on-trend metallic colour to the space. Wall paint should match the copper faucets and help to warm up the space.

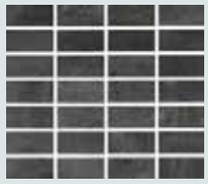
Coppertone your walls to get rid of boring neutrals. Caramel Corn 2160, BenjaminMoore.ca



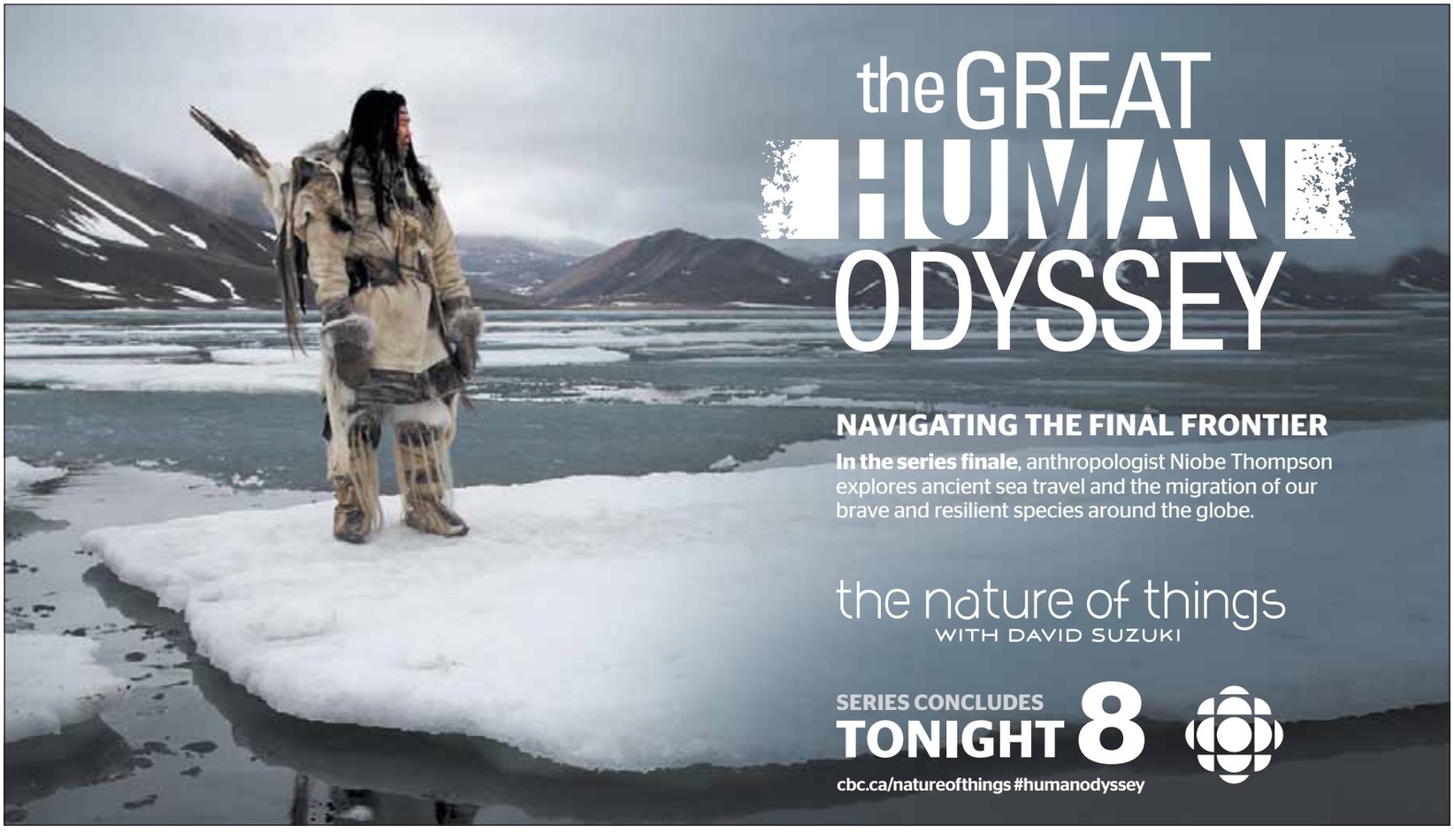
Countertops and backsplash: Deep grey and metallic sheen create chic counters and backsplashes with the durability of engineered quartz. Silestone Chrome counters, from $200 per linear foot, Silestone.com

Black is back! 19 cubic-foot Bottom Mount Black Fridge, $1050, Whirlpool.ca

Mixing copper with grey helps to warm up a small space. Danze Opulence Single Handle Pull Down Faucet, $350, Wayfair.com



Dark grey flooring will blend nicely into deep grey cabinets. Use a dark grey grout to reduce the lines between the tiles. Elaine Cityscape Carbon Glazed Porcelain Tile, $16.40/sq. ft., HomeDepot.ca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MBA GUIDE

Applications for two-year programs on the rise

Four out five companies said in a survey they planned to hire MBA grads in 2014

For the third year in a row, the number of applications to full-time, two-year MBA programs increased, according to the 2014 Application Trends Survey by the Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC).

GMAC is a non-profit organization of leading graduate business schools. It owns the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) exam, which is used by graduate business and management programs around the world. The 2014 survey collected data from 748 programs at 314 business schools in 32 countries.

The survey found that 61 per cent of global, full-time, two-year MBA programs participating in the survey had a growth in applications. At the same time, there was less interest in full-time one-year MBA programs.

Some industry experts suggest the rise in two-year applications underline the value that students put on two-year MBA degrees for personal, professional, and financial gains.

What's certain is that an MBA is a huge advantage in the workplace. In a separate survey called the Corporate Recruiters Survey, four out of five companies said they planned to hire MBA graduates in 2014.

Here are other trends in MBA programs and education:

COMPETITION AND SPECIALIZATION

Some schools are introducing new MBA specialization programs to give students a career advantage, including an MBA accredited by the Chartered Professional Accountants of Ontario.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Increasingly, students want to study outside of their country of citizenship. Full-time MBA programs continue to see an influx in international demand from regions such as East and Southeast Asia, Central and South Asia and Latin America. The aim is to maintain a diverse classroom and attract strong applicants from a variety of backgrounds.

SHUTTERSTOCK

WORK EXPERIENCE

Programs in Canada, Asia-Pacific and Europe have the smallest percentage of applicants with less than one year of work experience. Nearly one-third of applicants to full-time MBA programs in Canada have one to three years of experience.

TUITION ASSISTANCE

According to the survey report, 88 per cent of business programs worldwide will offer some form of tuition assistance, usually in the form of scholarships. Also, 70 per cent of programs expect levels of employer reimbursement in 2014 to remain the same as last year.

SHUTTERSTOCK

COMPETITIVE DIVER SAYS BALANCING TRAINING WITH STUDYING IS KEY

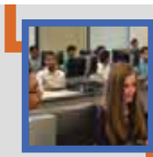
For many people, being a globe-trotting, competitive diver with a rigorous training schedule, numerous titles under their belt and a major shot at competing in the 2015 Pan Am Games would be enough to satisfy an appetite for accomplishment. Cody Yano, however, is showing no signs of slowing down.

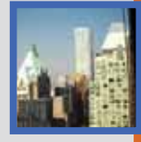
"I'm working toward my marketing degree at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology," says the 23-year-old champion, who finds times to train seven days a week between classes and assignments.

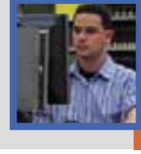
While the school doesn't offer programming specifically tailored to competitive athletes, Yano says that after a few bumps in the road he's been able to form a schedule that works for both him and his professors.

"'I've had times where I'm trying to take on too many classes and my diving starts to struggle or school starts to struggle," says Yano.

He insists that finding one's own personal balance is key for students hoping to dive into the same world.







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RECENTLY LAUNCHED PART-TIME PROGRAM

Location, innovation, and culture work together to make the Beedie School of Business at Simon Fraser University one of Canada's premier business schools.

The Beedie School of Business is the only accredited business school located in downtown Vancouver — and its location in the heart of a global city provides the perfect platform to engage with the business community.

"Our location and industry connections allow us to bring in leading edge professionals as guest speakers, deliver real-world business cases, and host top business events," says Jeff Nehajowich, manager, graduate programs at the Beedie School of Business. "The school also prides itself on having one of the largest mentors in business programs in Canada."

Due to its responsive approach, the Beedie School of Business is able to develop unique programs for specific categories of business. Its management of technology MBA — the first of its kind in Canada — was introduced 15 years ago to address a pronounced skill deficit in the flourishing technology sector in Vancouver.

Culture is another important element of the MBA programs. "We utilize a cohort model with small class sizes — students start and finish their program with the same classmates," says Nehajowich. "This allows them to develop strong relationships with both their peers and our faculty, from whom they receive personalized attention."

MBA INFORMATION SESSION FEB. 28

Ever wondered if an MBA is right for you? Attend MBA 101 on Feb. 28 at the Beedie School of Business to find out. beedie.sfu.ca/mba101.

FIRST IN PART-TIME MBA PROGRAMS

The Beedie School of Business has a suite of MBA programs for students to study part-time.

"Students take evening classes and directly apply their newfound knowledge in their workplace the next day," says Nehajowich.

CONTRIBUTED

- A new part-time MBA program was launched in January 2014 at SFU's Surrey campus — the first in the City of Surrey — to support the growing business community there.
- The management of technology MBA program was the first of its kind in Canada for technology professionals (and remains the only program of its kind in Western Canada).
- Beedie was the first business school in Canada to introduce an executive MBA program — almost 50 years ago.

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Flexible study options at Thompson Rivers U

MBA can be taken online on a part-time basis

Many people think that studying for an MBA means they have to spend long days at a university campus in classes.

Not at Thompson Rivers University.

"As one of the younger universities in Canada, we are not locked into tradition and can offer unparalleled flexibility in the Canadian MBA market," according to Victoria Martin, director of the MBA program.

While students can take their MBA program at the Thompson Rivers' campus in Kamloops, B.C., many choose to take it online as a distance education student.

"It's the same program, courses and curriculum. The only difference is where you physically do the course," says Martin.

Students needing the flexibility to be able to balance their study with work and family and other commitments choose to do the program online — and from where they live. "They're generally mature students balancing family commitments and needing to maintain full-time employment."

The part-time, off-campus student has usually been in the workforce for several years. "They're looking for a promotion, they're leveling out in their career and need to do something to take it further, or they're looking for a new job."

While Thompson Rivers' MBA program takes between 12 to 20 months of full-time study, most students that choose the online study option do it on a part-time basis. In that case, it has to be completed within five years, says Martin.

"All of our students are prepared to make good, strategic decisions for their organizations. We're giving them the skills to step into leadership roles, to see the big picture and to understand the global business environment as well."

Only final exams are done in person. "We find a local testing centre in Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, or Vancouver, and set that all up for them."

For more information, visit tru.ca/mba.

INTERACTIVE HIGHLIGHTS

"We've made the MBA program as interactive as possible," explains Martin. For distance students, instructors use lecture-capture software to record and upload their lectures. Students can watch lectures on their own schedules.

There are also required, online discussion groups, and students work in virtual teams to complete assignments and projects.

CONTRIBUTED

MBA

Introducing Thompson Rivers University (TRU)'s redesigned Master of Business Administration (MBA).

TRU's MBA program provides you with the management skills required to succeed in business on the global stage. Be prepared to accelerate your career in government, major corporations, small and medium enterprises, non-profits and entrepreneurial ventures.

One of the most flexible programs in Canada, the TRU MBA can be completed any way you choose. Adopt an education that suits you by studying on-campus, online or blending the two, and select part- or full-time study.

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THOMPSON RIVERS UNIVERSITY
School of Business & Economics

METRO SPACES

Walks keep body and mind sharp

SHUTTERSTOCK

Vancouver is a pet-lover's paradise. It's one of the top-ranking dog-friendly cities in North America, a place where the mild weather and varied terrain make the owning and walking of pets a pleasure.

The city has a wide range of off-leash dog parks and great locations to let your pooch run free. Try Nelson Park's enclosed dog area for a fun neighbourhood run. On Saturdays, the West End Farmers' Market sets up shop, a great place to pick up artisanal foods and crafts for a picnic or afternoon shopping spree.

Trout Lake is another fine canine destination, as is Vanier Park and Sunset Beach, friendly beaches and parks where your dog can work off a little steam.

Dogs, like people, need plenty of exercise to keep their mind and body sharp. It's in their genes — having been bred over thousands of years to herd, hunt and work alongside people. Domesticated pets, in contrast, spend most of their lives indoors, snacking or snoozing for much of the day. A visit to a dog park lets your dog frolic and explore, wrestle with other dogs and chase things around, the recipe for a healthy and happy animal.

Regular visits to dog parks won't just give your pet some much-needed exercise, it will also help them develop essential social skills — both with people and with other dogs. Being around other dogs helps your pet learn communication skills, like how to read body language and express their own needs without lashing out aggressively.

Taking a pet out for the afternoon is also good exercise for the owner, and a fun way to socialize with other pet owners in the neighbourhood.

Visit tourismvancouver.com for more about Vancouver's pet-friendly parks.

BOSA TAKES STRESS OUT OF OWNING A PET

CONTRIBUTED

Leading-edge Vancouver developer Bosa Properties provides rental condos and amenities that take the stress out of renting with a pet in the city.

"There are so many fantastic places to take your dog in Vancouver," says Tracy Fruin, a rental associate for Bosa Properties, the owner and manager of Bosa False Creek, a new rental condo development at Vancouver's False Creek.

"We wanted to offer new rental spaces in downtown Vancouver that would accommodate pet owners' needs," Fruin says.

Pet-friendly features are built into Bosa False Creek, including designated pet-friendly floors and a pet wash station.

"Your pet can get muddy in the park and come back to the apartment clean," Fruin says. "Seems simple, but it makes a big difference."

Bosa False Creek features ensuite laundry and other amenities that add comfort and convenience.

Whether you are in the mood to hit the gym, work on your computer, or enjoy the sunshine, the building has a space for you, including a fitness centre, DIY workroom, gardens and barbecue terrace, and Wi-Fi on the rooftop deck.

The building is located half a block from the Main Street SkyTrain Station and steps away from the shops, services, recreation and entertainment at Olympic Village and Cambie Village. Suites are available starting at $1,595 for a new one-bedroom.

"Bosa False Creek is built and managed by Bosa Properties, so you'll always have a reliable landlord," Fruin says.

The Bosa False Creek rental office is located at 180 Switchmen St. at Main and 1st Ave. It's open from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. (closed Monday and Tuesday).

For more information, or to apply online, visit bosa4rent.com.

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Parks are where memories are made

Enjoy lush green spaces, parks at Hycroft

When you have kids, living in or near green space is essential. Parks are places where kids make great memories — sports, dog walks, and bike rides. Green space around your home even reduces stress.

Hycroft, a new collection of 65 freehold row homes in South Surrey's Grandview Heights neighbourhood, was designed around the idea that everyone should be able to have access to their own green space.

The neighbourhood is lush all year round and Hycroft is a short trip from parks where families can exercise and play, including South Surrey's Sunnyside Acres Urban Forest, Redwood Park and Darts Hill Garden Park. It's also down the street from the new Grandview Heights Aquatic Centre, opening in the fall.

Hycroft's four-bedroom, arts and crafts style homes start at $560,900. On the homes' exteriors, dramatic roof features, brick accents and an earth-tone colour scheme impart a sense of presence.

NEARBY SHOPS

Restocking your fridge should be as easy as possible.

That convenience is a reality for homeowners at Hycroft, who can find more than 130 shops and services just five minutes away at Morgan Crossing and Grandview Corners. For cross-border shopping, head to the U.S. border just 10 minutes away.

Residents also have easy access to major transit routes, including Highway 99 and 24th Avenue.

"Our buyers feel a great sense of ownership at Hycroft," says Vanessa Isler, marketing and sales manager for the community, adding that Hycroft homes are the only freehold (non-strata) row homes available in South Surrey.

The interiors at Hycroft are as beautiful as the nature surrounding them.

CONTRIBUTED

The open concept design gives the homes an airy feel, with expansive windows that brighten the space.

High-end finishes are a hallmark of a Hycroft home, including stainless steel Jenn-Air appliances, solid quartz slab countertops, and custom Shaker-style cabinetry in the kitchen. Ensuites feature Carrera marble accents, Grohe rain showerheads and luxurious Nu-Heat in-floor heating.

The homes' walkout patios and private, professionally landscaped yards allow residents and their families to connect with nature from the privacy of their home.

Homebuyers will soon get a chance to experience the high-end interiors at Hycroft first-hand at the Hycroft display home, opening in late March. Visit the presentation centre at 16467 24 Ave. (24A Avenue and 165 Street). For more information, call 604-541-2495 or visit hycroftrowhomes.com.

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Tired of paying strata fees? Need more space? Hycroft may be exactly what you are looking for. Situated in South Surrey, these freehold, non-strata rowhomes give you all the advantages of a single-family home – including walkout patios, fenced yards, finished basements and a detached garage – all for the price of a townhome. This is a rare opportunity to live the dream without compromising your lifestyle or budget. Don't miss out.

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Find luxury at The Park Metrotown

Learn more at a grand preview this weekend

Modern luxury is making an entrance at Metrotown this weekend.

The Park, an exclusive collection of condos by Intergulf Development Group at the centre of downtown Metrotown, is opening its 5,000-square-foot sales pavilion and display home to the public. The grand preview starts Saturday Feb 28 at noon.

Drop by to experience the beauty and luxury of The Park in person and enter to win a $1,500 shopping spree at Metropolis at Metrotown. Plus, the first 100 homeowners will be eligible for savings of up to $15,000 off their new home at The Park Metrotown.

"Our grand preview is a great way for homebuyers to experience The Park's luxury interiors, get to know the neighbourhood, and benefit from great selection and huge savings," says Sean Lin, sales director of The Park. Offering one bedrooms from $260,900, two bedrooms from $442,900, and three-bedroom homes from $629,900, The Park is great value, too.

"Whether you're buying a home for yourself, or as a real estate investment, Metrotown is one of the highest real estate appreciation areas in Metro Vancouver, and you couldn't ask for more beautiful homes than at The Park," Lin says.

CONTRIBUTED

The modern luxury at The Park starts in the grand, four-storey lobby and continues with five star hotel-style amenities and stunning interiors.

Residents will experience beauty in the everyday with their homes' Italian-made Bertazzoni appliances and spacious layouts with generous balconies and high-end finishings.

The expansive windows are a true luxury alone, framing views of Vancouver, the North Shore Mountains, Deer Lake Park and even Mount Baker.

Visit The Park sales pavilion and display home at 4700 Imperial St., Metrotown. Contact The Park Metrotown team at 604-936-1888 or info@TheParkMetrotown.com.

STAYING FIT WILL BE EASY

Have you let your new year's resolutions slip yet? At The Park, you won't have any excuses.

When it's wet outside and residents don't feel like leaving their house, The Park offers alternative workout options.

The development's resort-style, 20,000-square-foot wellness centre includes a fully equipped fitness centre for cardio and strength training.

After your workout, head to the private spa to relax in one of the European inspired hydrotherapy pools.

The Park by Intergulf Development Group also offers more perks on the rooftop. The building's amenity space includes 2,500 square feet of rooftop oasis, where residents can relax in the outdoor lounge or stretch out and regenerate at the indoor yoga studio and juice bar after a long day.

Entertain your friends in the private dining room with catering kitchen.

Private gardens give residents a spot to grow kitchen herbs and more.

CONTRIBUTED

ALL YOUR AMENITIES ARE WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE

Do you want to step outside your door and have world-class shops at your fingertips? Are you looking for a home with plenty of nearby parks?

There's a place where you can have these perks and many others.

"Today's homebuyers want it all," says Sean Lin, sales manager for The Park Metrotown. "Everything should be nearby — shopping, a place to work out, green space, restaurants, and transit. That's what makes The Park remarkable. We have all those lifestyle essentials at an achievable price.

"Located across the street from Metropolis at Metrotown, The Park by Intergulf Development Group is positioned so residents will have the best access in the city to B.C.'s largest shopping mall. Find anything and everything you need at the complex's 450 shops and services.

Fashion lovers will be able to browse for hours for well-known brands like Guess, Coach, Aritzia, H&M, Michael Kors, among many others. Tech aficionados will be able to tinker to their hearts' content with the newest products at shops including the Apple Store and Best Buy.

The Metropolis food court has a cornucopia of dining options. Visitors can take a break at a table with a view of the mountains and indulge in curry, sushi, fresh stir fry, or a burger. Or simply get a coffee to punctuate their shopping trip.

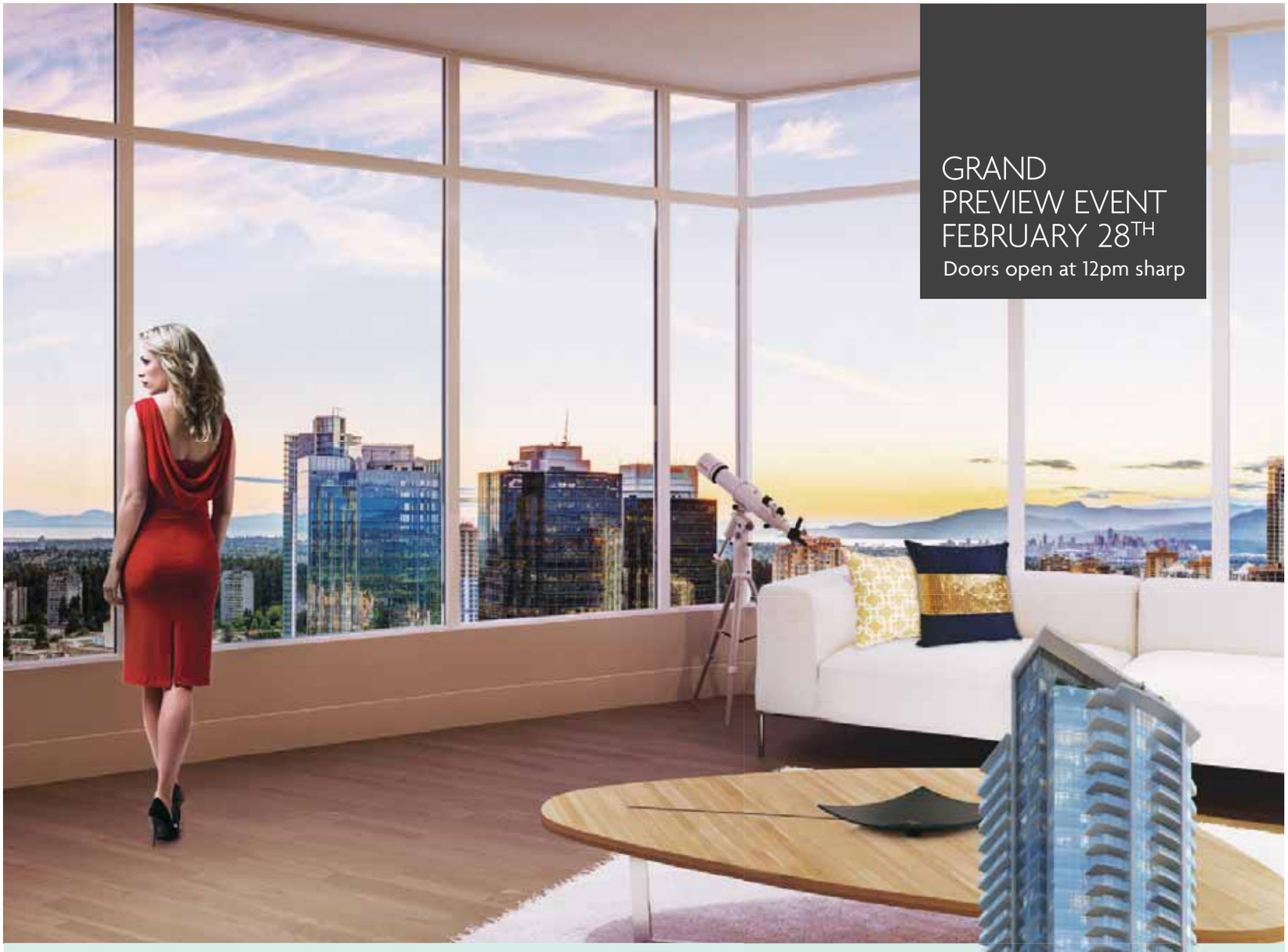
When you are looking to keep the cooking in-house, a wide selection of grocery shopping options is available at your doorstep, including T&T Supermarket and the Real Canadian Superstore.

Though the mall is close by, The Park is removed from its busiest areas to allow residents peace and quiet.

When residents want to get outside, The Park isn't just a great name. Parks and green spaces surround the development.

Bonsor Park and Recreation Centre, directly across the street, has many community amenities for residents of which to take advantage. Play outside on the playing field, tennis courts, track and playground, or indoors at the drop-in fitness classes or the full swimming pool. Bonsor has a plethora of options to keep you active, physically and mentally.

Burnaby's Central Park, with its forest trails and golf course, is a 15-minute walk or five-minute bike ride away from The Park.



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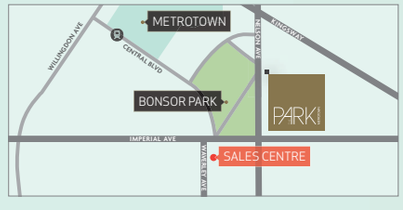

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SMALL SPACE, LARGE LIVING

EVOLVE HAS STRUCK A CHORD

CONTRIBUTED

Small spaces are big news in Surrey. Real estate in the city is in demand and fast disappearing.

Luckily, the city has planned ahead, creating zoning, infrastructure and other allowances that will let the urban space grow. Part of that plan is encouraging microcondos. These small living spaces are generally about 300 to 500 square feet in size and incorporate space-saving floor plans that make the best use of square footage.

Evolve, a new condo development by WestStone Group, opened its sales centre in Surrey City Centre in January. The development has made headlines for its tower homes that start at only $93,900.

"We really struck a chord," says Kiran Rai, marketing director for Macdonald Realty Platinum Project Marketing. "The demand for microcondos is only getting stronger."

Evolve, WestStone Group's latest highrise project, has been at the centre of much media attention over the past few weeks as the tower is set to offer homes at less than $100,000, a better value than a wood-frame home.

Evolve's suite collection ranges from 316 to 1,294 square feet. Available suites include studios, one, two bedroom and two plus dens, as well as townhome lofts and penthouses.

Simple design elements help residents live easily and well, including modern materials, bright interiors, sleek fixtures.

Minimalist finishes, such as the contemporary polished chrome hardware and the laminate wood grain flooring throughout the entry, bedroom, den, dining and living areas provide a simple, polished backdrop to a homeowner's personal style.

Buyers can choose one of two interior design colour palettes in light or dark neutrals.

The 8.5-foot ceilings and large windows throughout give the homes an open, spacious feeling and plenty of natural light.

"Big windows can make a small space seem huge," Rai says. "They're a very important feature whether you're in a studio or a penthouse."

Kitchens define modern luxury with their soft-close hardware, stainless steel undermount sinks, quartz countertop and backsplash, and quality stainless steel appliances by GE.

No matter the size of your home, sometimes it's great to step out your front door. At Evolve, residents can work out at the fully equipped gym and fitness room, or entertain friends in the theatre and multimedia room. Book the social room to cook for a crowd in the fully-equipped kitchen, then head up to the roof and catch the spectacular view from the sky patio and lounge.

"A home here has a lot of perks," Rai says.

WEST VILLAGE WILL BE BUZZING

Strategic city planning is key for a fast-growing city like Surrey.

That's the intention behind West Village, a new neighbourhood in Surrey's City Centre that will be home to six condo towers, including Evolve, and 2,800 new homes by WestStone Group.

Located in the heart of Surrey City Centre, West Village will be buzzing with more than 100,000 square feet of office and retail space, including a green grocer, cafés and local shops and services — all designed to create a rich, well-rounded neighbourhood.

Surrey's impeccable city planning means there are lots of parks in the neighbourhood. Residents at Evolve will have easy access to 45 hectares of green space, including the newly revitalized Holland Park.

Visit the Evolve sales centre at 13328 104 Ave., in Surrey.

Surrey's civic revitalization is starting to pay off

The city of Surrey's investments in the new Civic Centre have made the city one of best real estate investments in Canada.

More than $7 billion in public and private funds have gone into building the impressive new Surrey City Centre over the last eight years, and homebuyers are taking notice.

"Surrey's civic revitalization is really beginning to pay off," says Kiran Rai, marketing director for Macdonald Realty Platinum Project Marketing.

And the jobs are following. More than 1,000 new residents move to Surrey each month, creating a great need for affordable homes.

"WE'RE SEEING A GREAT MIX OF REAL ESTATE INVESTORS AND FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYERS COMING THROUGH EVOLVE'S SALES CENTRE."

– Kiran Rai, marketing director for Macdonald Realty Platinum Project Marketing

"We're seeing a great mix of real estate investors and first-time homebuyers coming through Evolve's sales centre," Rai says. "Surrey is a very good place to be right now."

The city's new Civic Centre, a short walk from Evolve, includes the civic plaza, the new city hall, the performing arts centre and the stunning flagship library, designed by Bing Thom Architects. The Civic Centre is also home to the city's best shopping and entertainment.

At Central City Mall, a stunning modern glass building in Surrey City Centre, Evolve residents can take advantage of a shopping centre, Simon Fraser University, an Arts Umbrella satellite location and recreational facilities

For jaunts across Greater Vancouver, Evolve residents won't need a car. Surrey Central SkyTrain Station is a five-minute walk away, and will take you to downtown Vancouver in about half an hour, faster than by car.

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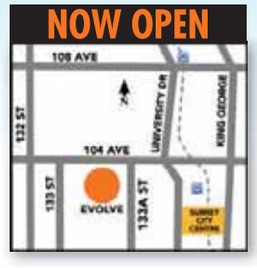

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PLATINUM PROJECT MARKETING

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

A fresh interpretation of Main Street

The Wohlsein is in one of the coolest areas of the city

Loft space with an industrial feel is no longer just for factories and warehouses. It's become a coveted style for young homebuyers, says Chris Brown, sales manager at The Wohlsein, a new housing development on 6th Avenue just off Main Street.

The 110-home mid-rise was designed by international architecture firm IBI Group and was created with careful attention to how the building fit with the existing architecture and character of the neighbourhood, Brown says.

Remnants of the neighbourhood's industrial past still remain, and many small businesses in the area still have warehouses and manufacturing facilities clustered in the area.

"The historical industrial-style design at Wohlsein is a fresh interpretation of the neighbourhood," Brown says. "The north end of Mount Pleasant is transforming into this bustling neighbourhood that's much more than the industrial area it was 50 years ago. Main Street has become one of the coolest areas in the city."

The mid-rise has historical industrial features including a heritage brick facade and classic-looking exterior, and large, loft-like windows.

"Today's homebuyers are looking for a spacious home that's made from honest materials that reference history," Brown says.

The homes start from the $290,000s with parking and storage, and come in two types — the Artisan Collection and The Wohlsein Collection. Artisan Collection homes feature lofty, nine-foot ceilings throughout. The development is scheduled for completion in 2017.

The Wohlsein's expansive window-wall systems maximize natural light in the open layouts and the solid concrete construction provides a sense of simplicity and security. Consistent with the design's minimalism and honesty, the Wohlsein offers buyers one of two subtle colour schemes — Stout and Craft — by local design studio Port + Quarter Interiors.

Kitchens are thoroughly modern and efficient, too, with polished quartz countertops, stainless steel, a single-basin undermount sink, a brushed chrome faucet and pull-down spray head, LED under-cabinet lighting and premium stainless steel appliance package.

"We're bringing Main Street loft living into the 21st century," Brown says.

The first public preview was Jan. 31. Find out more at liveateast6th.com or visit the presentation centre at 311 East 6th Ave, Vancouver (the corner of East 6th and Scotia).

CONTRIBUTED

YOUR DESTINATION FOR CRAFT BEER

Main Street is a beer lover's paradise. Some of the best breweries in Vancouver are located there, making it a community destination for anyone looking for a truly local culinary experience.

Residents at Wohlsein, a new condo development at 6th and Scotia just off Main Street, will live in the middle of a craft beer mecca.

The street has a long history of brewing. Once known as Brewery Creek, the Main Street area started around the late 19th century as a group of breweries clustered around a creek. That geographical feature was the hub that attracted enterprising business owners. Main Street became one of Vancouver's first thriving high streets.

More than 100 years later, Vancouver's craft beer renaissance has deep roots here and several new breweries to show for it.

Brassneck Brewery's tasting room offers a rainbow of styles to sample, some with interesting ingredient additions like hibiscus and coffee.

Pick up a homemade pickle alongside your growler refill at Main Street Brewing.

The breweries along Main Street sometimes partner with local restaurants and food trucks to make sure their guests get the full foodie experience.

Many of area's restaurants also carry great craft beer. Portland Craft, up the street from the Wohlsein, offers a wide selection of beers from Oregon on tap.

When you need to shop for more than just a growler refill, visit the nearby farmers' markets and artisan food providers.

Being two blocks from Main Street gives Wohlsein residents easy accessibility to all the convenient shops and services nearby, with a little more peace and quiet than you would find right on Main.

After your stopover at a brewery, take in a show. Main Street is an arts and culture hub. Catch one of the ever-changing shows at the art gallery Hot Art Wet City, head to a comedy night at Little Mountain Gallery, or catch an indie concert at The Fox Theatre.

LIVING YOUR LIFE TO THE FULLEST

Modern amenities are a must, wherever you live.

The Wohlsein will have a carefully curated set of amenities to help residents live their lives to the fullest.

Residents will want to take advantage of the area's many established bike routes, which lead all around the city. So the Wohlsein has a bike workshop to give you a place to bring your bike in for a tune-up.

The artist workshop is the place to get creative. Bring your art supplies and get messy.

When you just want to relax, the rooftop offers stunning views while the residents' lounge is a comfortable place indoors to meet your neighbours.

The Wohlsein is an inspiring place to be.

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Perfectly poised for spring in New West

Excitement is in the air at RiverSky at The River Market

Spring has sprung at The River Market, New Westminster's iconic waterfront destination.

Waterfront residents are perfectly poised to take advantage of spring on the river, stroll through the park, along the boardwalk, and pick up a bouquet of tulips at the market.

RiverSky, a new condo development on the New Westminster waterfront, is buzzing, too.

"We began our previews this past weekend and the response has been overwhelming," says Judy Graham, sales manager of RiverSky. "More than 1,000 people have come through the new sales centre and display suite since previews began. Excitement is in the air."

RiverSky is giving a fresh perspective to homebuyers who thought the waterfront lifestyle was out of reach.

"RiverSky is offering homes that make it affordable to live on the water," Graham says.

The development's two towers are perched on the Esplanade boardwalk, a few steps from New Westminster's River Market.

The development's one-, two-, and three-bedroom homes come with expansive river, city and mountain views, and start at $229,900. Previews are happening now.

"It's wonderful to see all the green things come out in spring and the flowers starting to bloom here in New West," Graham says. "Lifestyle is a big part of living at RiverSky. Residents get to watch the city blossom."

More affordable than any other waterfront community in Richmond, Coal Harbour, or downtown Vancouver, RiverSky is "a unique living opportunity and an excellent investment," Graham says.

RiverSky residents will have opportunities at their doorstep to enjoy the scenery, the nearby parks and the development's outdoor gathering.

Columbia Street, the city's original high street, is a three-minute walk from RiverSky and a great place to meet a friend for coffee. The street is filled with colourful local shops, restaurants and cafés, and one of New Westminster's best preserved collections of historical buildings.

Pick up groceries at Donald's Market, or dine in one of River Market's great restaurants — inventive Asian Fusion at Wild Rice, savoury pulled-pork sandwiches at Re-Up Barbecue, fresh seafood at The Boathouse, and a modern take on Thai at Longtail Kitchen.

Plentiful green space is one of New Westminster's best perks. The city has 48 parks, including the new Westminster Pier Park on the waterfront beside RiverSky.

Accessibility is second-to-none, Graham says — RiverSky is steps from New Westminster SkyTrain Station, giving residents a fast-track to downtown Vancouver, Metrotown, Surrey and the Vancouver International Airport.

SMART LIVING

Bosa Properties incorporates insightful features into each home and throughout the development at RiverSky.

In the parking garage, Bosa's forward-thinking BosaVOLT offers dedicated electric vehicle charging stations.

The BosaFRESH room off the main lobby offers a secure, temperature-controlled holding space for residents' at-home grocery deliveries.

CONTRIBUTED

GIVING HOMEBUYERS THE ENTIRE EXPERIENCE

Sometimes the definition of luxury is simply being able to enjoy a spectacular panorama. The high-quality interiors at RiverSky make the view that much more enjoyable.

"We wanted to give buyers the whole experience, inside their homes and out," says Judy Graham, sales manager of RiverSky.

The homes' expansive windows have a lot to do with it, not just letting in the view, but flooding the homes with natural light.

Buyers can customize their home's colour palette with one of three neutral designer options — River, Sky, or Metro. The durable, seamless engineered flooring throughout the living room and bedroom is sleek and easy to clean.

At RiverSky, the Italian kitchens were designed to elevate the everyday. Bright pots and pans make a statement against a minimalist colour palette of wood grain on the upper cabinets, matte white lacquered cabinets below and durable stone composite countertops. The quality is visible in the details, including soft-close doors and drawers.

Cooking is a pleasure with the RiverSky appliance package, including a gas cooktop, an integrated refrigerator with bottom freezer, a convection oven, and an integrated dishwasher.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

The master ensuite features a luxurious soaker tub for maximal relaxing after work.

Within RiverSky, residents can enjoy top-quality amenities, designed to fulfil their needs close to home.

There is no need for a gym membership. At the private and spacious RiverSky club, residents will have access to a fully equipped gym and yoga studio, as well as a meeting space, perfect for your pre- or post-work workout.

Have a pet? The RiverSky pet wash and grooming station simplifies washing up after a walk through Westminster Pier Park.

When friends come over, residents will have plenty of entertainment options. Relax at the fireside entertainment lounge with full kitchen, seating and large-screen TV. Enjoy views of the water on the rooftop patio and terrace with its fire pit and barbecue area.

Nearby shopping is plentiful, too, starting with RiverSky's 9,000-square-foot Shopping Mews on the ground level.

"Our ground-floor shops and services will give residents incredible convenience when they need a last-minute item or ingredient," Graham says.

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FURNITURE FOR EVERYONE

Fun, colourful home and office furniture and decor isn't just for an elite group. Everyone should be able to enjoy it.

That's the philosophy behind INspiration, a furniture store for modern home and office furniture in Vancouver.

Owned by brothers Peter and Steen Skaaning, INspiration focuses on contemporary furniture.

"My grandfather was a cabinetmaker and my father is a cabinetmaker," says Steen Skaaning, who started his career in the same trade. "I understand how quality furniture is constructed."

Skaaning's experience in cabinetry led to a deep appreciation for quality design and construction.

"My hands-on experience informs my decisions when I'm purchasing products," he says.

Opened in August 2002, the 40,000-square-feet showroom carries furniture and accessories for all areas of the home and office, including the living room, dining room, bedroom and office.

"We travel the world looking for new products to bring in and we don't compromise on quality," Skaaning says.

Contemporary furniture has its roots in the Bauhaus movement in the 1920s and '30s in Europe, when young artists and craftspeople started playing with new materials like plastics and steel.

"A lot of our products have origins back to that time," Skaaning says. "But we also carry new design concepts."

CONTRIBUTED

INspiration is currently mixing furniture made from reclaimed, or upcycled, wood from old houses, fishing boats and other wooden structures. This creates a unique and eclectic look, which is popular in Vancouver.

The store carries a range of price points "to make our furniture accessible to everyone," he says. "Expensive furniture is not for everybody, but contemporary furniture can be."

Skaaning and his team are also conscious of their buyers' varying space limitations and storage needs.

"We're used to shopping for smaller furniture now that many people are living in smaller spaces."

The store's multi-function furniture helps maximize use of space with storage under beds, in ottomans, and other space-saving techniques.

"I'm very passionate about what I do," Skaaning says.

Home design should revolve around you

If you don't have form and function, you don't have Danish modern design.

"When it comes to interior design, your home should revolve around you, not the other way around," said Virgile Machenaud, store manager of BoConcept, a Danish modern furniture store in Vancouver. "We say a sofa should never be egocentric."

Since Danish modern design first gained popularity in the 1950s, its emphasis on comfort and simplicity has made it classic.

BoConcept was at the forefront of the movement. Founded in Denmark by craftsmen and cabinetmakers Jens Ærthøj and Tage Mølholm in 1952, BoConcept was influenced by the functionalist design esthetic that was sweeping Europe. The two craftsmen began by producing cabinets, adding table sets, beds, wall systems, bookcases, modular sofas and kids' furniture to the collection over the years. In 2008, the company started offering value-added services for furniture buyers, including in-home design consultation to help buyers get the most out of their homes.

CONTRIBUTED

"Our designers think deeply about how their products will improve people's lives," Machenaud says.

BoConcept carries furniture and homewares by world-renowned designers. Design star Karim Rashid creates touchable, playful furniture and homewares. He describes his Ottawa collection for BoConcept as "sensual minimalist."

Designer Oki Sato won the honour of designer of the year from both Wallpaper Magazine and Elle Decor International Award in 2012. He created BoConcept's origami-inspired fusion collection.

"Having beautiful, functional design in your home is important for your well-being," Machenaud says. "It improves your quality of life."

The Danish modern design philosophy that BoConcept was founded on is about creating a living space that is as attractive as it is usable. Every person needs something a little different, and every living space tells stories about its residents.

"We surround ourselves with what's important to us and with things that help us live the life we want," Machenaud says. "Whatever your style, it's important that when you come home, you feel at home."

For more, visit boconcept-vancouver.ca.

COLOURFUL REMINDERS

Vancouver's buildings are full of stories if you know where to look.

At False Creek, former industrial land has become residential and commercial, but colourful reminders of its past still remain.

The New Look Building, formerly known as Sigurdson's Millwork, is located on 6th Avenue between Granville and Oak streets. The building's exterior may look unassuming, but inside it's apparent this is a historic landmark.

In its heyday, the mill created finishings for churches in B.C., including Holy Rosary Cathedral, Christ Church Cathedral, and First United Church in Vancouver.

The three-storey building still has its original timber construction, with exposed beams built more than 100 years ago. The structure was reconstructed in 1988, and now has skylights and views of downtown Vancouver over False Creek.

It's currently home to a BoConcept store, INspiration Furniture, Natuzzi Italia Gallery and the latest addition, a Stressless Comfort Gallery.

For more, visit newlookltd.com.

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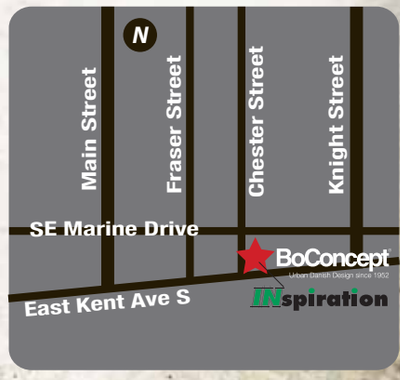

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Cole Cassels mixes his grit with talent

Prospects report. Vancouver's 3rd-round pick in 2013 second in scoring with junior team

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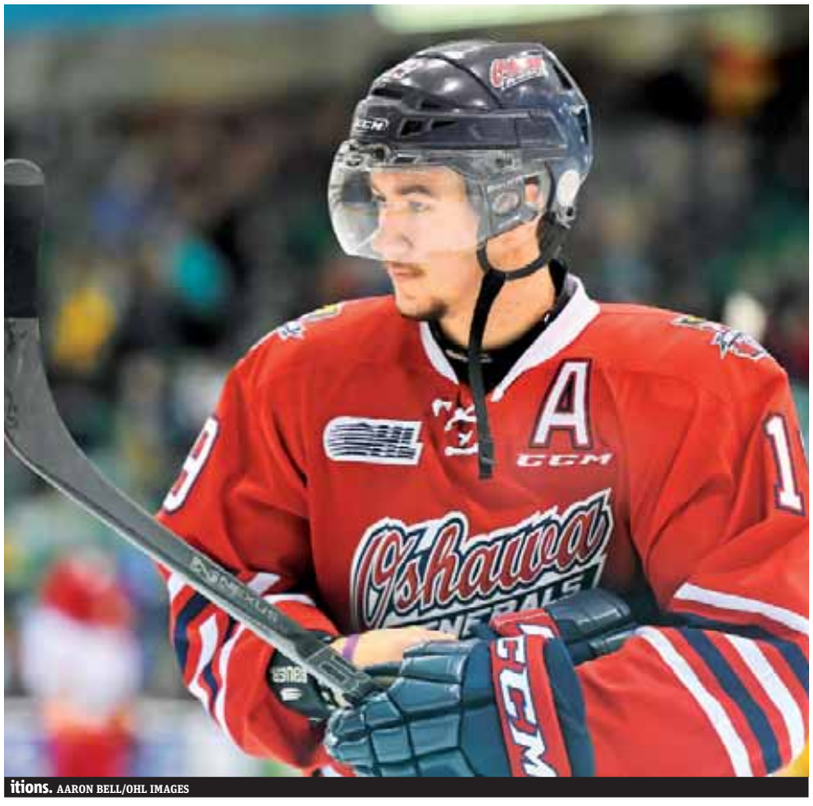

itions. AARON BELL/OHL IMAGES

Cole Cassels embraces the physical element of hockey. He's also valued for his creativity and offensive awareness.

He knows through experience about playing with an edge, battling in the corners for pucks and finishing his hits, and about going beyond that point, too. He also plays in a variety of important situations, like penalty kill and power play, and has a knack for distributing the puck.

That combination has made him an increasingly effective OHL player as he's come of age, and, as of June 2013, a prospect of the Vancouver Canucks.

"He's a way nastier player than people think when it comes to playing down low, playing off the forecheck," said D.J. Smith, who coaches Cassels and the Oshawa Generals.

"He's a kind of player you don't find too often any more.

"Sometimes he does go over the line … but no doubt, in the big games, he knows what's right and what's wrong. He's just ultra competitive."

In November, Cassels was suspended 10 games after catching an opposing defenceman with a high hit.

In a phone interview Tuesday, Cassels said he agreed with the league's decision.

"Going back, it's something I wish I could change," said Cassels, selected by the Canucks in the third round, 85th overall, in the 2013 NHL draft and signed to an entry-level contract in December that same year.

"I was more cautious of the hits and finishing my guys in the right positions," said Cassels. "I feel like I have that edge back."

The suspension resulted in Cassels missing more than a month with the Generals. He also attended the U.S. national junior team's selection camp.

Despite the earlier absence, he's still second on the team in scoring, with 70 points in 45 games this season. That includes nine points in his last five games.

Smith believes Cassels can eventually develop into a "really good" second- or third-line centre in the NHL.

He touted Cassels as a top penalty killer and a member of the first-unit power play. He also uses the centre late in close games.

"He's arguably our most valuable player," said Smith.

Point total

70

Cole Cassels has recorded 70 points in 45 games this season for the Oshawa Generals of the Ontario Hockey League.

NHL

Canucks to cap road trip against lowly Sabres

The Vancouver Canucks have a chance to end their five-game road trip in style, as they face the Buffalo Sabres on Thursday.

Despite a plethora of injuries, including to top defencemen Alex Edler and Chris Tanev and goalie Ryan Miller, the Canucks have won three of the first four games on this trip, thanks in large to the recent play of backup puck-stopper Eddie Lack.

General manager Jim Benning said on TSN 1040 that Miller is out four to six weeks with what looked to be a sprained knee.

Lack was forced into Sunday's game against the New York Islanders when Miller went down with what the club called a lower-body injury, and he's been spectacular since taking over the starting duties.

In his last two appearances, Lack has stopped 67 of 68 shots faced, and it will be interesting to see if head coach Willie Desjardins continues to ride the hot hand, even against the Sabres, or chooses to give Jacob Markstrom, on recall from AHL Utica, the start.

The Canucks will go into Thursday's game against the Sabres sitting second in the Pacific Division, and they could maintain that position with a win.

With the playoff race heating up, and next Monday's trade deadline approaching, the Canucks face a difficult month of March.

They'll play the red-hot L.A. Kings, winners of eight straight, twice in nine days, and the St. Louis Blues, second in the Central Division, twice. They also make a trip to Nashville to face the NHL-leading Predators. CAM TUCKER/METRO

Flames burn Devils to reclaim wild-card spot

Sean Monahan scored a power-play goal 35 seconds into the third period and the Calgary Flames beat the New Jersey Devils 3-1 on Wednesday night to move into a Western Conference wild-card spot.

Curtis Glencross scored late in the second period to tie it 1-1, T.J. Brodie added a short-handed empty-net goal in the final minute, and Karri Ramo made 26 saves as the Flames snapped a three-game losing streak.

Calgary, which lost 1-0 at the New York Rangers on Tuesday, moved one point ahead of idle Minnesota in the playoff race.

Mike Cammalleri scored his fifth goal in four games for the Devils. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Chicago

Kane breaks collarbone, out for long term

Blackhawks star Patrick Kane had surgery Wednesday to repair a broken left collarbone, likely sidelining the dynamic forward for the rest of the season unless Chicago makes another deep run in the playoffs.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jets make deal with Canes to add winger Tlusty

The Winnipeg Jets acquired winger Jiri Tlusty from the Carolina Hurricanes on Wednesday in exchange for two draft picks — a third-round pick in 2016 and a conditional sixth-rounder in 2015.

Tlusty, who has 13 goals and 10 assists this season, gives the Jets some depth they were lacking due to a number of injuries. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Jiri Tlusty GETTY IMAGES FILE

Twins suddenly scintillating again

THE HOCKEY NEWS
Matt Larkin
winnipeg@metronews.ca

Catching up with the Vancouver Canucks on their road trip through New York last week was an eye-opening experience. There they were, fighting tooth and nail for a playoff spot, down three of their top four defencemen in Alexander Edler, Chris Tanev and Kevin Bieksa. Spirits, however, were notably high during an off-day practice at Manhattan's Chelsea Piers.

Bo Horvat arrived for a THN interview with a smile, wearing Henrik Sedin's turquoise Jofa helmet. Ryan Miller fondly reflected on his time in Buffalo (both pieces can be found on THN.com). The ones notably driving the happy mood? Henrik and his brother Daniel. The Sedins joked around with reporters and seemed to spread cheer everywhere they went. The moment was symbolic of the force driving this team's never-say-die attitude.

It's mind-boggling to see the Canucks still in a post-season position given what they've lost and, more impressive still, winning three of this road trip's first four games, taking out the Rangers, New York Islanders and Boston Bruins, who are hardly easy outs. Some credit goes to Eddie Lack, who has been outstanding two straight games subbing for the injured Miller. But the No. 1 reason this team defies the odds right now: The Twins.

It's been a rough couple years for Henrik and Daniel, especially Daniel, who has taken heat in this very column space for his decline in play. But in February, the two are playing their best hockey since their Art Ross-winning days. Daniel has 13 points in 13 games this month. Henrik has been even better, with 15 points. He has nine points in his past five games, including four multi-point efforts, which helped him earn NHL second star of the week honours along the way.

Daniel hasn't regained his goal-scoring touch, but the Sedins are cycling and generating offence as well as they have in several seasons. They've sent a message to the league that, at 34, they are nowhere near finished as frontline NHL players. We won't see them reach 100-point heights again, but they've made themselves and the Canucks relevant this season.

The Canucks have won three of four on their current Eastern road trip, largerly thanks to the fine example set by the Sedin twins. ELSA/GETTY IMAGES

If the twins can maintain their current pace of play, maybe they carry this team to the post-season after all. The one important caveat: That's what it's going to take. The Canucks are short-handed enough that any drop off from the Sedins will sink them. Whatever happens, it's nice to see the smooth Swedes back making sweet music together.

Jays pitcher Miguel Castro stretches on Wednesday in Dunedin, Fla.
NATHAN DENETTE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ex-Canadians RHP brings power to Jays

At six-foot-five, Miguel Castro is hard to miss at the Toronto Blue Jays' spring training camp.

The spindly Dominican right-hander uncoils like a praying mantis on the mound. And he throws smoke.

The first time Jays general manager Alex Anthopoulos saw him pitch for Class-A Vancouver, he thought the speed gun was broken because it kept showing 98 m.p.h.

"I literally said, 'Hey, is something wrong with the gun? Is it frozen?'" Anthopoulos said.

Having just turned 20 in December, Castro is a work in progress. But the fact he has control to go with speed has Anthopoulos enthusing.

"(With) any young player, there's risk," Anthopoulos said. "But young players that control the strike zone have a much better chance, and young starters and relievers that throw strikes have a pretty good chance to survive up here."

Castro is listed at 190 pounds but looks 20 pounds lighter. While there isn't much meat on the bone, it doesn't seem to be a problem. His fastball has been clocked at 102 m.p.h., according to Anthopoulos.

Josh Thole, who caught Castro's bullpen session Tuesday, was impressed by what he saw.

"The way that he commanded his pitches, that's what impressed me more than anything," said Thole. "Not that he throws 100 (m.p.h.) or whatnot, but throwing a breaking ball and not just throwing it but knowing what he wants to do with it. "

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"He's got a real willingness and desire to unpack what it takes to catch it well. So, I don't anticipate us having trouble."

Blue Jays veteran knuckleballer R.A. Dickey, who partnered with newcomer Russell Martin for the first time during a 65-pitch bullpen session.

NBA

Heat dazzle Magic

Luol Deng had 21 points, Dwyane Wade added 18 and the Miami Heat rallied to defeat the Orlando Magic 93-90 in overtime Wednesday night. Hassan Whiteside added 15 points and 13 rebounds. The Heat have won three of four since losing Chris Bosh for the season. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mavs at Hawks

Rondo's absence proves crucial

The Atlanta Hawks took the lead with a 13-0 run in the third quarter and went on to a 104-87 victory Wednesday night over the Dallas Mavericks, who were without suspended guard Rajon Rondo.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hornets at Bulls

Rose-less Bulls fall

Michael Kidd-Gilchrist had 18 points and 12 rebounds, Mo Williams scored 17 and the Charlotte Hornets beat Chicago 98-86 Wednesday night after the Bulls learned Derrick Rose will have another knee surgery.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Wizards at T-Wolves

KG wins in return to Minnesota

Kevin Garnett made an emotional return to Minnesota with an ear-splitting reception and he had five points and eight rebounds as his Timberwolves overcame a jittery start to beat the Washington Wizards 97-77 on Wednesday night.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

T-Wolves forward Kevin Garnett battles at the rim with Wizards centre Marcin Gortat on Wednesday night in Minneapolis, Minn. JIM MONE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bulgarian forward Dimitar Berbatov celebrates scoring Monaco's second goal against Arsenal GLYN KIRK/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Soccer. Berbatov and Monaco stun Gunners

Veteran striker Dimitar Berbatov demonstrated his enduring quality by inspiring Monaco to a surprise 3-1 victory over Arsenal on Wednesday, priming the principality team for a place in the Champions League quarterfinals for the first time in 11 years.

Arsenal's first-leg loss came against the lowest-ranked team remaining in the competition — and which was also depleted by injuries — ensuring a miserable night for Arsene Wenger against his former side.

Monaco hadn't even managed to score in the first hour of the six group stage games, but stunned the Emirates Stadium by taking the lead in the 38th minute. It did owe much to good fortune, with Geoffrey Kondogbia's deflected strike wrong-footing goalkeeper David Ospina.

But Monaco punished Arsenal's sloppiness eight minutes into the second half, launching a counter-attack which the 34-year-old Berbatov completed on his return to London — where he played for Tottenham and Fulham.

Although Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain's curling strike in stoppage time briefly gave Arsenal hope going into the second leg on March 17, he then gave the ball away inside his own half. Monaco went on another rapid break and Yannick Ferreira-Carrasco restored the two-goal cushion. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Elsewhere

In the night's other match, Bayer Leverkusen beat 10-man Atletico Madrid 1-0 in Germany. Hakan Calhanoglu gave Leverkusen victory in the first leg against last year's finalists Atletico Madrid.

Canada's rugby sevens in showdown with U.S.

Olympic qualification. Two rivals could meet with one berth at games up for grabs

More than halfway through the HSBC Sevens World Series, it's clear the Canadian men's rugby team will have to qualify for the Olympics the long way.

That means a June trip to Cary, N.C., for a regional qualifier and a showdown with the U.S. for the one Olympic sevens berth up for grabs in North America and the Caribbean.

The U.S. blanked Canada 20-0 in the Cup quarter-finals at the recent sevens stop in Las Vegas. After some bad breaks, the Canadians "lost their way a bit" according to coach Liam Middleton.

The Americans finished fourth at the tournament while Canada, third in Sin City last season, tied for seventh.

Some had dreamed of an easier route to Rio, given the top four teams on the world circuit gain Olympic qualification automatically. Canada finished a surprising sixth on the circuit in 2013-14.

But injuries, a delay in replacing coach Geraint John and perhaps some flaws beneath the surface have left Canada in 13th place after five of nine events. The Americans, 13th last season, stand seventh.

Canada appears headed to remain in the World Series — the lowest-ranked of the 15 teams is demoted at the end of the season, with Japan likely to go down — and is now gearing toward the Olympic qualifier and Pan American Games.

Middleton was hired last September to succeed Geraint John, who left in June to take over the Australian sevens program. Immigration red tape prevented the Zimbabwe native from arriving in Victoria until November.

Injuries have not helped his cause. While Liam Underwood and Mike Scholz are fit again, Nanyak Dala, Justin Douglas, Ciaran Hearn, Nathan Hirayama and Phil Mack remain out. And Middleton does not expect any to be back in time for the Hong Kong event in late March. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Future event

The World Rugby Sevens Series is coming to Vancouver and BC Place Stadium, beginning in March of 2016. Rugby sevens, a style named for having seven players aside, is now an Olympic sport, and will be part of the program at the 2016 Games in Brazil.

Richmond's Nathan Hirayama is one of a handful of Canada Rugby Sevens players' currently sidelined. CAMERON SPENCER/GETTY IMAGES FILE

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AUGMENTED REALITY

Stuck on 12 Across? Scan this image with your Metro News app for today's crossword and Sudoku answers. It's OK. No one's watching.

Horoscopes by Sally Brompton

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
You won't be shy about telling others what you think but you are expecting too much if you expect everyone to agree with you and you may lose friends.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
According to the planets you will be taking on a lot more duties over the next few weeks. That may not be what you were hoping to hear but it will earn you more respect and money.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
Something you hear from a friend will make you wonder if you have taken a wrong turn. Maybe you should retrace your footsteps and start again.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
No matter how annoyed you may be with a particular person this is not the time to put your feelings into words. Hit back only when you have more evidence to make your case.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
Partners won't be happy if you go back on what you told them a few days ago. Your priorities have changed but if you made promises you must keep them.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
You seem to believe the universe is against you but that is not true. Just because you have fallen out with a loved one over something minor does not mean it's the end of the world.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
You will get the chance to make serious progress in a creative endeavour of some sort. But don't get carried away because there is a lot of work to do yet.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Someone will play on your fears and make you think a situation is worse than it is. According to the planets you should reject everything you hear that makes you feel uneasy.

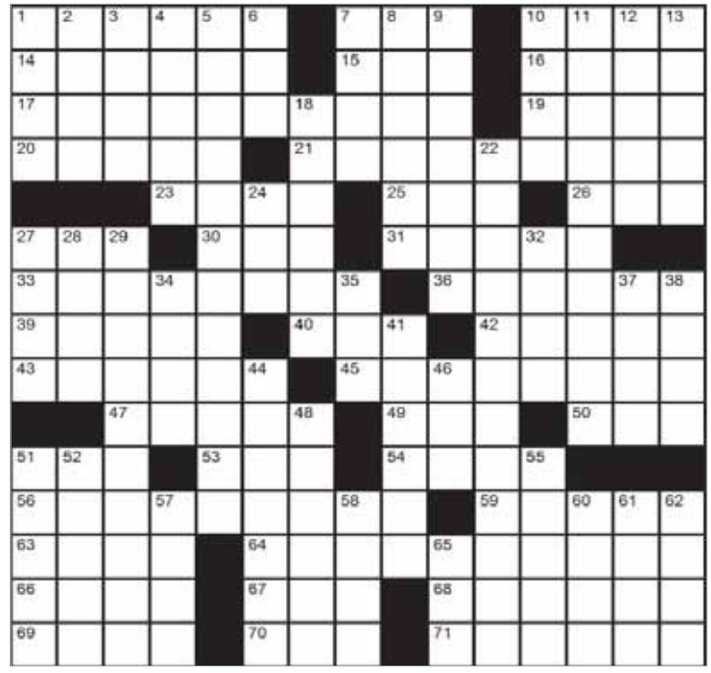
♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
You will have words with someone whose personality rubs you the wrong way. Less timid souls might keep their opinions to themselves. Why should you when you're the one in the right?

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Make the most of your newfound freedom to get out into the world and explore. Do something you have not been able to do for some time today.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
The only danger today is you might say too much and tip off a rival about what you are up to. Be wary if they try to engage you in personal conversation.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You will get advice from all directions today and if you are smart you will ignore it all. You already know what it is you should be doing. So, do it!

Crossword: Canada Across and Down by Kelly Ann Buchanan



Across

1. Accounting reviews
7. Passenger's proof, puny-ly
10. 'Trillion'-meaning prefix
14. Noel Coward play, __ Spirit (Currently at the Princess of Wales Theatre in Toronto)
15. Poetic contraction
16. Bygone boy-friends, briefly
17. BC community near Langley
19. Performs
20. 1871 premiere city of Aida
21. Nunavut: __ Island
23. Certain curtain
25. Egyptian cobra
26. Batch
27. Religious robe
30. Dog type
31. "Eating __" (1982)
33. Terry David __, Canadian broad-caster/actor who is an alum of MuchMusic
36. Busybodies
39. Cooking, as potatoes
40. Kander and __ (Stage musicals song-writing team)
42. Opera voice
43. Kelly Clarkson's "__ Like Us"
45. Saw sort
47. Retro synthesizers
49. Bow
50. Agree-er's vote
51. Post-WWII female mil. aviators group
53. "That's splendid!"
54. Zeds alternatives
56. __ Head: According to The Flat Earth Society, it (located on Fogo Island, Newfoundland) is one of the four corners of the flat earth
59. Ranch sound effect
63. Fertilizer component
64. King Arthur's furniture piece: 2 wds.
66. Common seasoning
67. 'Guitar' suffix
68. Mr. Hammer's
69. Payola$ singer Paul
70. Acidity measures, commonly
71. Puts into disarray

Down

1. Rhyming pattern
2. "The Producers" (2005) role
3. "Little __ _ know..."
4. Roman roads
5. They might add pops of colour to a sofa: 2 wds.
6. Part [abbr.]
7. Wrench
8. Bulletproof vest fibre
9. Forest fluid: 2 wds.
10. Winnipeg Jets
11. Governor General of Canada: His __ the Right Honourable David Johnston
12. Ode-to-the-past style
13. Holding
18. Music style
22. Highlights/scores and more program on TSN
24. Jul. follower
27. Draw _ __ (Do cartography)
28. Car mechanic's job
29. Rural village in Ontario's Prince Edward County
32. Slangy one-eighty turns
34. Bev. Hills clinic request
35. US TV channel
37. Casanova
38. Mlle. cousin
41. Audacious
44. Vain vacay: 2 wds.
46. State above Calif.
48. Nike logo
51. George _. __, 43rd President
52. Wide assortment
55. Tailoring lines
57. Pen brand, with Paper
58. __ and bolts
60. Nile wader
61. Hilarity
62. __ Village, in Hamilton
65. Beaver's construction

Yesterday's Crossword

Online

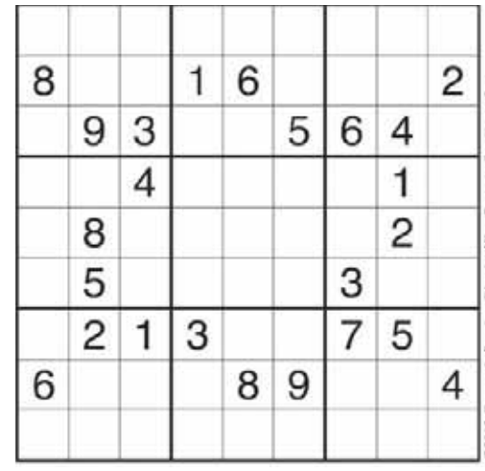
See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

Yesterday's Sudoku

7	5	3	6	8	1	9	2	4
6	9	2	7	4	3	1	8	5
1	8	4	5	2	9	6	3	7
2	6	7	1	3	5	4	9	8
3	1	8	9	7	4	2	5	6
9	4	5	8	6	2	3	7	1
8	7	9	3	1	6	5	4	2
5	2	1	4	9	8	7	6	3
4	3	6	2	5	7	8	1	9



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